[For information pertaining cooperative farms and collectivization, see 5; Free Europe Committee, El Europe, category 116, pp. 65, 68-71. -- Analyst]

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in particular the Roman Catholic Church, were already deprived of their funds. This was a result of practices supported by legal provisions.

[423]

In the first place, it refers to land. Agricultural land still possessed by the church after the land reform of 1919 was in fact taken away in direct violation of the law.

[671]

Article 8 of Law No. 187 of March 23, 1945, on agrarian reform provided that:

> "agricultural land belonging to monasteries, mitropolies, bishoprics, parishes as well as clerical endowments are excepted, from expropriation, and left in the ownership of the present title holders."

Likewise, certain categories of land, such as vineyards and forests, were generally exempted from expropriation. Nevertheless, most of Catholic landed property, including forests, vineyards, etc., were commandeered early in 1945 and thereafter seized by various "local committees" and, eventually, divided into small holdings. The remainder was seized in its entirety in February 1949 without compensation. This time the Government did not even take pains to issue a decree legalizing the actual seizure.

[454]

The "Sacred Fund" of the Catholic Church (<u>see supra</u>) also lost its value. It was composed almost exclusively of governmental bonds and were given after 1919 to the religious Catholic bodies in Transylvania as compensation for estates expropriated at that time. The terrific inflation of 1944-1947, swept out their value. Then, just before the monetary stabilization of August 14, 1947 government bonds were compulsorily called in and paid for in inflated lei, only an insignificant part of which was exchanged after the monetary stabilization for new currency.

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another 200,000 who held property jointly and were not included in his computations.

On the assumption that a holding of less than 3 hectares was totally inadequate, at the Rumanian level of production, to provide a family with even the bare means of subsistence, Creangă concluded that over 60 per cent of the peasant cultivators (landless peasants plus those with less than 3 hectares), "for the most part heads of families, find themselves in unconditional dependence upon landowners and tenants." [11] If peasants owning between 3 and 5 hectares —holdings certainly on the margin of subsistence—are included, it appears that nearly 85 per cent of the peasants were unable to earn a secure living from the produce of their soil and had to seek additional income elsewhere.

The concentration of land in great estates does not, of course, necessarily imply an agrarian crisis; English and Prussian agriculture developed successfully on large properties. Nor does the peasant's need to go beyond his own holding to earn a living necessarily spell misery for him. The reason the large estate appeared at this time to be the central feature of the Rumanian agrarian problem lies in the particular development of rural property and labor relations in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Unfortunately, the background of Rumanian agrarian history is still extremely obscure. The original social function and source of privilege of the landowning nobles, the boyars, have been the subject of several notable but inconclusive controversies among Rumanian scholars. It is not certain when and to what degree the mass of Rumanian cultivators were reduced to a servile status. Evidence provided by villages of *răzeşi* and *moşneni*—free peasant communities with a form of common landholding, which have survived as relics in the hilly districts—suggests that they at one time were a prevalent form of rural organization, but scientific investigation of these villages has been undertaken only in recent years.[12] There is no question, however, that by the eighteenth century the boyars—and the monasteries—had come to control a great deal of the land, to which

11. Creangă, *op. cit.*, I, 189.

12. The term *boier* has been the popular, if historically inaccurate, name for all large landowners. The problem of ascertaining the boyar's original role resembles in some respects the confusion in Russian history between allodial hereditary landowners and the nobility of service. The villages of free peasants (răzeşi in Moldavia and moşneni in Wallachia) pose, in respect to their nature and origins, questions similar to those relating to the Russian *mir* and the South Slav *zadruga*. Illuminating discussions of these points may be found in H. H. Stahl's article, "Organizarea socială a ţărănimii," in *Enciclopedia Românie* (4 vols., Bucarest, n.d.), I, 559–576, and in his recent book, *Sociologia satului devălmaş romînesc* (Bucarest, 1946), I.

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● 423 566 the majority of the peasants were bound as *rumâni* (the most common term for serfs). In its form as in its relatively late flowering the Rumanian servile system more nearly resembled that of Russia than that of western Europe.

The life of the Rumanian serfs was bitter and squalid, as is illustrated by periodic mass flights across the Danube or into Transylvania. Their burdens resulted from their being on the bottom of the social structure of a state first fighting and then subservient to the Ottoman Empire and from the task of supporting, in a relatively self-sufficient economy, the needs of the boyars and their retainers. Although the growing boyar domination was a gradual process and apparently accompanied an internal breakdown of the village community, the act of binding the peasant to the land, carried out as a general measure by Michael the Brave (*ca.* 1558–1601), had, in large part at least, a military and political purpose: to insure a settled population able to provide military supplies. However, while the tax burden and the tributes owing the Turks were transmitted from prince and boyar to the back of the peasant, servile labor obligations, the *clacă*, were relatively light. The population was sparse, and the boyars were not reluctant to grant the peasants land, of which there was an abundance, provided, of course, they paid their tithes in kind.

566 175 Toward the middle of the eighteenth century two new elements appear: increasing state legislation, superseding or codifying customary practices, and the growth of commercial activity. The twin action of these two factors becomes ever more important right through the nineteenth century, and on their interrelation hangs much of the agrarian problem. Both were destructive of the old closed society of traditional rights and a relatively static economy; both were introduced from without. Sometimes they reinforced one another in promoting change; sometimes one held the other in check.

Around 1750 the Phanariot prince, Constantin Mavrocordat, formally abolished serfdom in an act anticipating and resembling the Habsburg Emperor Joseph II's emancipation of 1781. Although this act, in principle, relieved the peasant of personal bondage and of being tied to the land, it did not rid him of labor obligations or dues to the boyar for the use of the land he cultivated. Indeed, at about the same time the boyars initiated a persistent and successful effort to increase the number of days of the clacă and to define a working day in terms which greatly exceeded what a peasant could actually accomplish in one day. Simultaneously, they began to estab-

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lish and extend seigneurial monopolies on such activities as milling and the sale of wine.

Both actions clearly arose from the growing commercial possibilities of these years. The Turks were increasing their imports of grain from the principalities, and despite Turkish restrictions trade was developed with neighboring states. Hence it was in the interest of the boyars to increase the amount of labor available to them and to monopolize profitable commercial undertakings. One direct consequence of this new commercial pressure on the peasant was the revolt led by Tudor Vladimirescu in 1821 "against the boyars who have devoured our rights."

The next step is signalized by the Treaty of Adrianople of 1829, which opened Rumanian ports to world commerce, and the Organic Statutes of 1831–32, which gave the principalities their first constitutional documents. The effect of the first was vastly to accelerate the pace of commercial expansion. At the beginning of the nineteenth century raising livestock had been the principal occupation, but it was now replaced by the cultivation of cereals, for which the acreage nearly doubled in the thirty years betwen 1829 and 1859. This expansion of commerce in cereals continued until by the outbreak of the First World War Rumania ranked fourth among the world's cereal exporters and fifth among the wheat exporters. As a result, the relative value of land steadily increased. As early as 1805 the boyars undertook to limit the peasants' right to pasture, and in 1828 Prince Sturdza announced that the peasants had no right to exploit more than two-thirds of the lord's domain.

This trend was reinforced by the Organic Statutes. Introduced during the period of Russian occupation, these acts attempted to codify, in somewhat different terms for the two principalities, the relations between boyar and peasant. In so far as they reduced arbitrary action and made precise and definite the peasant's obligations, they were to his benefit. This gain, however, was largely canceled by the fact that for the first time the lord of the land was defined as a full proprietor of his estate. The traditional concept of "master of the land" was replaced by legal ownership. In return for set labor obligations and tithes, the peasants were granted use of land not in excess of two-thirds of the estate, the remaining third being totally in the lord's hands.[13] Under this system, while the peasants had life use of

13. The extent of the lord's demesne land—the land actually cultivated under his direction—before the nineteenth century is not certain. Mitrany, *op. cit.*, p. 21, points out that early village maps show no separate reserve for the master of the land, but

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423 land, it was not passed on from father to son but reverted to the landowner, who was in turn responsible for providing newly married young cultivators with a holding. In fixing the extent of land to be held by each cultivator, these acts, especially the one for Moldavia, reduced the amount customarily enjoyed for pasturage and restricted the peasants' forest rights. Although the peasant was theoretically free to move, he was in fact tied to his community by a net of regulations.

[433] With a few modifications Rumanian agrarian relations were determined by the Organic Statutes for the next third of a century. Under 566 them, as a contemporary observer remarked, "The principalities took 175 on a new life"; there was a marked increase in economic activity. That 421 the benefits of this activity were not generally shared by the peasants, however, is shown by their continued exodus across neighboring frontiers. They were being forced out of their old semipastoral habits, and the very increase of cereal exports could work to their disadvantage. For example, the entire 1847 wheat crop was sold in advance because of the urgent demands in other European states suffering from food shortages in the late 1840's. As a result of these premature sales, made largely through the boyars, the principalities experienced a food crisis which contributed greatly to the peasant unrest in the turbulent year 1848.

Apart from the abortive attempts at reform during the short-lived Wallachian revolution in 1848 and a moderate revision of the Organic Statutes in 1851, the next major change was the Act of 1864, which paralleled the 1848 emancipation in the Habsburg lands and the Russian emancipation of 1861. This act, promulgated for the united principalities by Prince Cuza, for political and social rather than for economic reasons, abolished the clacă and other servitudes. The peasants obtained full title to the land they had in use, based upon earlier regulations, and the landowners were given a compensation for the loss of their labor. The law followed the now recognized provision that peasant property could not exceed two-thirds of the former lord's estate. The new holdings could not be sold or alienated for a period of thirty years.

By this act, so it seemed, the remnants of the old servile system had been abolished. Possession and use of land were transformed into absolute property rights; the peasant holder was now a free proprietor, owing no servile obligations, and, indeed, the translation of the clacă and other dues into a redemption payment does seem to have dimin-

merit, *op. cit.*, p. 45, doubts if there is sufficient evidence to permit a positive declara- ... the peasants traditionally had had the use of all the land.

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ished his burdens.[14] Yet a quarter of a century after the Act of 1864 there began those peasant disturbances which culminated in the 1907 uprising. In some way, as Dobrogeanu-Gherea said, "The year 1864 carried in its womb the terrible year 1907."

The connection, however, is not a simple one and is paradoxical in several respects. Between 1864 and 1907 Rumania continued its rapid expansion in agriculture and commerce. Exports of grain, for example, increased from about 1,400,000 tons per year in the early 1880's to nearly 2,500,000 tons in 1905. Hence it is necessary to explain how under such circumstances there should have been growing peasant discontent. Was there, to repeat that old and difficult question, increasing poverty in the midst of expanding national wealth?

In the first place, while the Act of 1864 was passed against the wishes of the boyars, by a coup d'état on the part of Prince Cuza, the administration of the country, especially local administration, was still largely under their control, and they had ample opportunity to twist the provisions of the law to their advantage. Undoubtedly many injustices were committed in its application: often the landowner was able to distribute the worst land to the peasants, holding the best in his own estate; in a number of cases false measuring standards were used, an easy trick in a country lacking basic ground surveys; sometimes the landowner so divided the holdings that the peasants were unable to reach their property without paying a toll. As a cumulative result of these malpractices it is possible that although by the law the peasants were to receive the land they had in use before the reform, they actually received less and of lower quality. Local studies of a few districts indicate that such may have been the case, but statistics are lacking to make a general conclusion.

Another criticism of the law has been that while the peasants' claims to land could not exceed two-thirds of the lord's estate, the excess demand being met by grants of state land, in those regions where the peasants' quota was less the lord was able to retain as absolute property, with no future obligation, well over the minimal one-third. Moreover, under the Organic Statutes the lord was responsible for providing newly married peasants with a holding, while the new act made no adequate provision for subsequent generations. Peasant holdings now became inheritable property to be passed on from father to children. Since the new holdings were virtually inalienable and

14. This point, as in Russia, has been much disputed, and some authors have maintained that the peasants' burdens actually increased. The comparative figures, however, which are provided by Emerit, *op. cit.*, p. 516, if they are accurate and representative, show a considerable falling off of the amount owed by the peasant.

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since the practice was to distribute land equally among heirs, there was an inevitable tendency, on many peasant holdings at least, toward a progressive subdivision of the property. This tendency has been regarded as one of the worst consequences of the reform: "At the end of three generations, the land distributed by Cuza to the rural workers was dispersed into an impalpable dust." [15] Unquestionably the fragmentation of holdings constituted a major obstacle to the introduction of rational agricultural techniques. Further, the reform did not grant land to a number of peasants, those who previously had not performed the clacă or who were listed as free proprietors. Finally, an examination of the size of the lots granted to the peasants reveals that a large number of cultivators did not receive enough land in the first place to enable them to establish a self-supporting holding on the level of cultivation then prevailing.[16]

It is clear, then, that the peasants' gains were limited, that in most cases they were not in a position to set up an independent farm, that the lord was relieved of all future responsibility, and that a number of categories of peasants were not taken care of. Such certainly were the drawbacks. The basis of Rumanian agriculture was not really altered. The reform of 1864 neither set Rumanian agriculture on the path of small peasant farming on the western European model—whether that was even theoretically possible, given the general nature of the Rumanian economy, will be discussed later—nor fostered large-scale farming based upon agricultural wage labor in the English or Prussian pattern.

In addition to the limitations of the 1864 reform, two other factors have been adduced to explain growing peasant dissatisfaction: the laws on agricultural contracts of 1866 and 1872, which are said to have reintroduced serfdom, and the land hunger of an increasing population. The immediate effect of the reform was to create a crisis in production and a great decline in the area sown, largely because the peasants preferred to cultivate their new holdings and refused to work for the landowners, who were faced with a serious labor shortage. The boyars attempted to compensate for this by passing special laws governing agricultural contracts, which unquestionably put the peasant at the landowner's mercy in matters regarding the fulfill-

15. Emerit, *op. cit.*, p. 519.

16. The allotments were based on an earlier threefold division of the peasants, determined by the number of oxen they possessed. Though the figures are only approximate, peasants having four oxen received roughly 6 hectares; those with two oxen 4½ hectares; and the so-called "tail-end" peasants, 2½ hectares. At the prevailing level of cultivation it was estimated that only the first class, a rather small minority of the peasantry, could obtain an assured surplus.

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ment of labor contracts and even permitted the employment of military force to drive the peasant to work. Although the harsher aspects of these laws were later abandoned, they permanently affected landlord-peasant relations and did much to justify the term neoserfdom, "the confirmation of the old servitudes in contractual form."

Yet these laws, while harsh on the peasant once he fell into the power of the landowner, would be significant only on the assumption that the peasants were increasingly obliged to go to the landowner for assistance. That is, the laws of contracts merely accelerated the relapse into a servile system—one lacking the paternalistic protection of the old order—but were not in themselves the cause of a deteriorating situation. Moreover, the peasant uprisings did not occur when the laws were at their harshest but later when some of the worst provisions had been abrogated.

Land hunger, in general, results from an excess of population relative to the amount of land available. As has been noted, at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Rumanian principalities were not thickly settled, though even at the time of the Organic Statutes it was not possible to give adequate grants of arable land to the peasants in the old and relatively thickly settled mountainous districts. By the middle of the century the boyars were invoking population pressure to explain the high cost of land. There is no question that in the second half of the nineteenth century Rumania's population expanded at a very rapid rate.

At the same time, however, the expansion of land under cultivation appears to have been increasing even more rapidly, as the plough was put to untilled pastures, waste, and meadow.[17] The extent to which the peasants were able to benefi' from this expansion of cultivated area cannot be estimated with any precision. Undoubtedly much of it took place on large estates under the control of the landowners. To some extent, too, it resulted from the peasants converting their pasture land to arable. The act of 1864 had made no provision for communal pasturing; the small peasant holdings were inadequate for both grain and livestock, and from 1864 there is a notable decline in animal husbandry. It is estimated that whereas in 1860 meadows and pasture comprised 33 per cent of the total surface of Rumania, they were reduced to 17 per cent in the years 1901–5, thus offsetting to a considerable degree the gain in land under cultiva-

17. According to Constantin Garofild, *Chestia agrarĕ în Romănia* (Bucarest, 1920), p. 128, between 1859 and 1899 the population of Rumania increased by 54 per cent, whereas the area of land under cultivation increased by 85 per cent between 1862 and 1905.

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making greater demands upon both the land and the peasant. Since his profits tended to be in direct proportion to the area he was able to lease, there was a marked inclination to build up vast agricultural trusts, some of which covered more than 100,000 hectares. Although ultimately the large tenant was a consequence rather than a cause of the agrarian problem, he was the focus of hatred and abuse: hated by the peasants because he dealt directly with them, verbally abused by the landowner-politicians who made him their scapegoat. Certainly some of the more spectacular injustices and preposterous labor contracts can be found on lands operated by tenants.

This speculative interest on the part of the tenant in acquiring more land contributed to a rapid rise in rents. Between 1870 and 1906 rents mounted between 100 and 200 per cent for a third of the properties and over 200 per cent for another third. The peasants consequently were obliged to pay more dearly for the use of land. In 1870 they generally retained from two to four parts of the produce of rented land and delivered one part to the landowner or large tenant; by 1906 in over half the cases studied in an investigation, the ratio was one to one.[21]

The rise in the value of land was not accompanied by an equivalent improvement in agricultural techniques. Most of the peasants were both inexperienced in the careful cultivation of small holdings and financially unable to improve their methods, and the large landowners and tenants had little incentive. By the working of the 1864 reform the peasants remained attached to their strip of land, lacking even the free mobility of the farm laborer. They continued to own most of the means of production: over 90 per cent of the draft animals, ploughs, and harrows in Rumania belonged to the peasants.

Under these conditions the distinction between large-scale and small-scale farming was blurred, and it was characteristic of the latifundiary cultivation prevailing in Rumania that the size of an undertaking was not determined by an organized integration of the productive factors of a given area but was rather the arithmetical sum of a large number of peasant cultivations. The peasant, in return for a piece of land, contracted either to cultivate another piece of land for the proprietor or tenant or to share the produce in a form of metayage. Money payments were uncommon except in Moldavia.[22]

21. Creangă, *op. cit.*, II, 18–22.

22. It must be observed, however, that while the great estates did not, in most cases, utilize progressive farming methods, the output of the large farms was consistently higher than that of the peasant holdings. The reasons for this difference have been the occasion of much dispute. Supporters of large-scale cultivation have held that despite

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From a consideration of all these factors the peculiar nature of the Rumanian agrarian crisis emerges. The poorer peasant, who had been forced to go to the landowner or tenant for additional land, was in an increasingly bad bargaining position. The landowners or tenants, in responding to commercial incentives, could increase production with little cost to themselves merely by demanding more of him, since he supplied the implements and draft animals as well as the labor.[23] Clinging to his little plot of ground and doggedly refusing to become a migrant wage laborer, the poor peasant could see no possible relief to his situation except to have more lar .. On the other hand, the richer peasant, whose land was sufficient to produce a surplus, likewise found himself restricted by the relative monopoly in land, the high rents, and the speculation of the large tenants: the system was an obstacle to the further improvement of his position.[24]

In general, then, the economic background of the 1907 revolt lay not in peasant poverty alone but in the protracted dislocating effect of commerce upon a previously "natural economy" and a soci ty involved in the ambiguities of neoserfdom. This dislocation has occurred in many forms throughout the globe where modern industry and commerce have impinged upon traditional social and economic patterns. The particular form it took in Rumania, increasing agrarian tension in the midst of a flourishing foreign commerce in cereals, was a product not only of economic and demographic factors but of Rumania's particular social structure, which was dominated by a boyar oligarchy.

Socially and economically Rumania resembled tsarist Russia in several ways. As Dobrogeanu-Gherea observed: "We are the only country in Europe, with the exception of Russia, which has the sad privilege of peasant revolts—neither the Western countries superior to us in culture, nor those of the East, such as Serbia and Bulgaria, which are inferior to us, have them." [25] In both countries the history

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the prevalence of unprogressive latifundiary cultivation, large property was making technical advances and was paving the way toward more scientific farming. Advocates of peasant farming have replied that the large owners had kept the best land to themselves and that the peasants were unable to give adequate attention to their own fields. As one peasant is reported to have said: "Do you think this beautiful maize is mine? It belongs to the Jewish tenant. I haven't even hoed my own once yet, his twice. He didn't allot us the land till late." Creangă, *op. cit.*, I, 14.

23. This curious fact, that under the prevailing agrarian relations prosperity seemed to sharpen social tensions, may explain why the 1907 revolt should have followed the excellent 1906 harvest.

24. This grievance of the richer peasants may serve to explain why the minor uprising of 1888 had been most violent in the district of Ialomiţa, a sparsely populated region having a comparatively prosperous peasantry, but in which an exceptionally high percentage of the land (69 per cent) was in the hands of large proprietors, who leased out more than 70 per cent of their estates.

25. Dobrogeanu-Gherea, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

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of property relations followed a different course from that in the West, and in both countries contact with the West created a steadily increasing crisis which the legislative measures of the nineteenth century did not solve and in some respects exacerbated. In neither case did peasant emancipation lead to the healthy development of small holds but rather to the appearance of the land-hungry cultivator still in a position of dependence on the landowner.[26]

While there were these similarities in Russian and Rumanian social and economic life, and more than a casual parallel in the development of agrarian relations, the political and international positions of the two states were entirely different. This difference explains in part some of the very great divergences in the recent history of these countries.

Political Aspects of the Agrarian Question

Although Rumanian economic and social relations were such as to create a dangerous tension in the countryside, politically, in marked contrast to tsarist Russia, there was relatively little revolutionary activity. This difference has often been attributed to the lethargy and supineness of the Rumanian peasant or to his Daco-Roman stability and love of order and hard work. National qualities may have played some part, though the violence of the 1907 revolt was damaging to many such theories. A more substantial reason would appear to lie in the contrast between the political and international situations of the two states.

Russia, a great empire, was assured of its independence as a nation. Existing institutions were firmly fixed. Russian social reformers could direct their energies toward internal issues without being preoccupied with the question of national survival. For these reasons the climate was favorable to a revolutionary spirit. Quite opposite conditions obtained in Rumania, a newly created state whose position in the community, or anarchy, of nations was by no means secure. Many Rumanians were not as yet included within the country's

26. The sensitivity in Rumania to developments in Russia would suggest the presence of common characteristics. The Russian emancipation of 1861 was followed by Prince Cuza's Act of 1864. There is evidence that the Rumanian rising of 1889 was aroused by a rumor that the tsar had ordered land to be divided among the peasants. The Russian Revolution of 1905 found a reflection in the 1907 revolt in Rumania, and of course the Russian Revolution of 1917 had a direct bearing upon the Rumanian agrarian reforms of 1918–21. The correlation of these events is certainly more than a chronological coincidence. It might be added that Stolypin's program to reform Russian agriculture by creating a class of strong peasant holdings resembles some of the recommendations put forward by the Conservative agrarian expert Constantin Garofild.

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175 speech of May 27, 1917 by Professor N. Basilescu, who had been one of the few to foresee the 1907 uprising: "This is the state of mind in the country: disbelief in the government, disbelief in Parliament, disbelief in the constituted authority. . . . Today as yesterday revolution appears to the Rumanian peasant the only possible means for him to resolve the great case between him and the proprietors of estates." [4] The eleventh-hour move by the king, which was supported by both the parties, seems to have been instrumental in averting trouble and in encouraging the troops. In the final Russian offensive of July, 1917, the Rumanian troops made a brave showing against the Germans and fought valiantly at the battles of Mărăşti (July 28) and Mărăşeşti (August 12–19).

175 428 The paternalistic tone of the king's address was also apparent, however, in the steps taken to carry out his proclamation. No peasant delegate participated in the constituent assembly which convened in 1917, and the bill passed by that assembly was simply a compromise worked out by the leaders of the Liberal and Conservative parties. Under Article 19 of the 1866 Constitution, property was inviolable; it could be expropriated only for reasons of public utility, narrowly defined as communications, public health, and national defense. Hence, to expropriate land for the purpose of distributing it to the peasants, it was necessary to amend the constitution.

The 1917 amendment extended the definition of public utility to include expropriation for the purpose of increasing peasant holdings. Cultivable land belonging to the crown and to public and private institutions and all rural properties belonging to foreigners and absentee owners were to be expropriated in their entirety. In addition, 2,000,000 hectares of cultivable land were to be expropriated from private properties (including absentee holdings) of over 100 hectares, the expropriation to be based on a progressive scale which was not defined. Thus, no maximum limit was set to properties. The figure of 2,000,000 hectares was not based on any agricultural criteria but represented a compromise between the amounts proposed by the Liberals and the Conservatives. The chief fault of this amendment was that it was not itself a law for expropriation but only set forth the principles of such a law. Section 5 of the amended Article 19 provided for the promulgation of a law to be passed six months after the national liberation by a two-thirds majority, usually required only for constitutional amendments. If this law were not passed, there would be no land reform.

With the October Revolution, Russia's withdrawal from the war,

4. Quoted in Diaconescu, *Chestiunea țărănească în România*, p. 141.

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and the collapse of the Eastern Front, Rumania was in a hopeless military position, and in March, 1918, it sued for peace. The pro-German Alexandru Marghiloman, who had remained behind in Bucarest, was entrusted with a new government. This government dissolved the constituent assembly, and Marghiloman declared that "the whole agrarian problem must be taken up anew from the beginning."

During the brief term of the Marghiloman government, Constantin Garoflid, Minister of Agriculture, introduced a series of agrarian measures: obligatory leases, the reorganization of the Ministry of Agriculture, and the organization of agricultural workers. Garoflid, though a Conservative and a landowner, had long been opposed to the latifundiary system in Rumania and desired to build up a prosperous medium peasantry. He regarded the 1917 amendment as "not a scientific work but an electoral manifesto." Although previously recognizing the need for expropriation, he considered such an extreme measure unsuited to wartime conditions and advocated forced leases of land to the peasants as a temporary solution. Much in Garoflid's program was conducive to a rational development of Rumanian agriculture. He may even have had in mind a progressive series of reforms, but his proposals were open to the criticism that in Rumania a policy advocating such moderation and gradualness most often meant doing nothing at all. His program, however, was not even to be begun.

The collapse of the Central Powers in the autumn of 1918, Rumania's reentry into the war, and the withdrawal of Mackensen's forces again reversed the situation. The Marghiloman government was dismissed and its laws declared null and void. With the breakdown of the Central Powers, chaos spread through eastern Europe. Revolutionary conditions prevailed in Russia, Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria. In Rumania a dry year, combined with the dislocations caused by the war and the German occupation, left the peasants hard pressed for food. The action of the Marghiloman government in dissolving the constituent assembly had increased their doubts in the good faith of any government. Tension was heightened by the revolutionary activity among the Rumanians in the neighboring regions of Transylvania, Bucovina, and Bessarabia, which had been or were shortly to be incorporated in Greater Rumania.

The Agrarian Reforms of 1918–21

Immediately after the armistice, on November 12, 1918, King Ferdinand issued a new proclamation reaffirming his pledge of 1917.

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Under the pressure of events the government did not bother to follow the formalities prescribed in the 1917 amendment but quickly drafted a decree-law, to be ratified subsequently by the parliament. This decree-law of December 15, 1918, laid down the norms under which land was immediately to be expropriated. Some of the leading provisions were as follows: [5]

a) As in the constitutional amendment, arable crown and mortmain land as well as foreign and absentee properties were completely expropriated.

b) The amount of 2,000,000 hectares was to be expropriated on a sliding scale from private properties of over 100 hectares. This rather arbitrary scale did represent an advance upon the 1917 amendment in limiting all properties to 500 hectares, but it made no provision for geographical differences, relative land hunger, or rational organization of estates. The law based the expropriation on properties rather than on proprietorship, to the benefit of the landowner with multiple holdings. Moreover, the relation between the scale of expropriation and the 2,000,000 hectares to be obtained was not accurately computed, and the expropriation actually fell short by some 450,000 hectares.

c) Compensation for expropriated land was to be based on a number of factors: price of sale in the region for five years prior to 1916, regional level of rent, evaluation by credit institutions, net income per hectares, etc., but was not to exceed twenty times the regional rental rate. Payments to proprietors were to be made by 5 per cent state bonds, redeemable in fifty years. The state was to contribute up to 35 per cent of the cost.

d) Peasant associations were to be created to serve as temporary recipients of the transferred land. The law went into little detail as regards resettlement, which was covered later by the law of 1921.

Ion I. C. Brătianu, who had headed the government on December 14, 1918, resigned on September 27, 1919, in a dispute with the Allies on the peace settlement. King Ferdinand accepted the resignation and formed a nonparty cabinet under General Vaitoianu to hold a general election. This election, virtually the first to be uncontrolled in Rumanian history, produced surprising results. The Liberals lost most of their seats in the Old Kingdom, and after some delay a bloc made up of the newly formed Peasant party and the National party of Transylvania assumed office.

During its brief term this government, with the Transylvanian Vaida-Voevod as Premier and Ion Mihalache as Minister of Agricul-

5. Full summaries of this and the subsequent agrarian law of 1921 are given in Diaconescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 148–334, and Mitrany, *op. cit.*, pp. 111–182.

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ture, introduced a bill for the resettlement of the peasants as well as for an extension of the expropriation. According to Mihalache, the Vaida government sought to make a new agrarian reform which was not based on the limited concept of the constituent assembly at Iaşi.[6] Although this bill was not passed, it is of importance as an early expression of the agrarian program of what was to become the National Peasant party.

The *exposé de motifs* of the bill granted that when promulgated the acts of 1917 and 1918 represented the only workable formulae, given the composition of parliament and the state of the nation, but stated that the incorporation of Bessarabia and the other provinces in Greater Rumania now made imperative further action on behalf of the peasants in the Old Kingdom, since the new provinces were enjoying extensive land reforms. By the terms of this bill expropriation was to be based on the total holdings of a proprietor, not on separate properties, and was extended to include property continuously rented for ten years prior to 1916. Private property in excess of 100 hectares of cultivable land was to be expropriated; in this the framers of the bill consciously followed the provisions of the relatively radical Bessarabian land reform. Exceptions, however, were made for estates organized as farms with a significant capital investment; these were limited to 250 hectares in densely populated regions and to 500 hectares in regions of sparse population. Property remaining after expropriation was not to be leased except to peasant cooperatives. In general, the bill was more radical than its predecessors in the Old Kingdom and represented a peasant point of view, both as regards the expropriation and the organization of agriculture, rather than a political compromise formulated by the landowners to avert peasant revolt.

As soon as the nature of Mihalache's bill became known, the old parties took steps to block it. The Minister of Agriculture was unable to obtain an audience with the king, allegedly as a result of Liberal intrigue. On March 12, 1920, after failing to obtain the king's approval to present the bill as a government measure, Mihalache presented it to the assembly as a private member's bill. At that session he warned: "But it should be known that if parliament has to leave, or if the government has to leave, it is because of a conspiracy by the whole oligarchy of all the boyar political parties." His prediction was realized; on the following day the government, which still held a substantial parliamentary majority, was dismissed by the crown in

6. For the text of this bill and the debate at its introduction, see the pamphlet published by the Federaţia Democraţiei, *Proectul legei de împroprietărirea ţăranilor* (Bucarest, 1920).

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what has been called "the most questionable act of King Ferdinand's reign." [7] Although peasant disturbances, general instability, and the inexperience of the Vaida government have been cited as reasons for its downfall, it seems clear that its dismissal stemmed directly from the hostility of the landowners to the proposed agrarian bill.[8] Thus, the effort of the Peasant party to carry through a more radical reform by legal means was defeated.

The new premier, General Averescu, was selected because he was a popular military hero. He immediately ordered new elections and by the usual controls was able to obtain a majority for his People's party. Mihalache was replaced by Constantin Garoflid. Garoflid, as has been seen, was by no means opposed to land reform, but he did not approve of the emphasis upon large-scale expropriation and the creation of a multitude of small holdings. It was his task, however, to complete a measure based upon principles he had always attacked.

The second land reform law for the Old Kingdom was promulgated on July 17, 1921. Although primarily concerned with allotting land and resettling the peasants, it also extended expropriation to obtain the 450,000 hectares lacking after the 1918 decree-law. Expropriation was now based on proprietors rather than properties, and the old sliding scale was abandoned in favor of a more elastic measure which took account of regional geographic differences and relative land hunger.[9] Land left to the proprietor was to be determined at once,

7. R. W. Seton-Watson, *History of the Roumanians* (Cambridge, 1934), p. 551.

8. The attitude of the landowners at this time is shown in a circular distributed by the Union of Syndicates of Moldavian Landowners: "We, landowners, are firmly determined to oppose by all means, and especially by impeaching before the Court of Cassation, all those provisions of the decree-law of 1918, of the law for communal grazing, and of any future law or decree, which may conflict with the letter of the Constitution regarding the expropriation of land . . . To re-consecrate the intangible right of property, we demand that a law shall be passed which shall punish with hard labor for life whomsoever shall speak of expropriation again." Quoted in Mitrany, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

9. Land was left to the proprietors on the following basis:

	Land cultivated by owner (hectares)	*Land cultivated by owner with important capital investments (hectares)*
In highlands and hills	100	100
In plains, where demand for land was great	150	200
In plains, where demand for land was moderate	200	300
In plains, where demand for land was satisfied	250	500

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but land to be expropriated was not to be taken over until it could be utilized. Thus expropriation was to be gradual, keeping pace with resettlement. 423

The 1921 law established a list of priorities of claims to receive land, determined primarily by war service rather than by economic considerations. Land to be distributed was divided into complementary lots for peasants with less than 5 hectares, full lots of 5 hectares, and colonization lots of 7 hectares. Provisions for grazing land had been made by a special act of September 24, 1920; these were supplemented by Article 23 of the law of 1921. Nothing was done with respect to woodlands and forest.

The problem of compensation created much confusion. The acts of 1917 and 1918 had merely limited compensation to not more than twenty times the regional rent for 1916. With the decline of the leu after the war, this compensation was deemed inadequate, and the 1921 law raised the rate to forty times the 1916 regional rent. Half the price was to be paid by the state. The peasants' payments were to extend over a period of twenty years, on condition of a 20 per cent payment at the outset.

The scattered distribution of peasant holdings in uneconomic strips was one of the chief hindrances to rational cultivation. Garoflid had always regarded consolidation as indispensable for a more productive agriculture, and Article 136 of the 1921 law stated that measures for consolidating holdings would be provided for in a special act. This act, however, never appeared, and scattered strips remained characteristic of Rumanian farming. One reason for inaction on such an important issue was that the peasants themselves were not striving for consolidation as they were for more land. Mihalache, while granting that "none of us could be against consolidation on principle," feared that the dangers of misapplication under existing circumstances were greater than the probable benefits.[10]

A related problem was the practice of dividing holdings equally among heirs. The law of 1864 had made peasant allotments inalienable but had not prevented their fragmentation through inheritance. Article 126 of the 1921 law limited the splitting of allotted land by succession to a minimum of two hectares in the plains and one hectare in the hills and highlands. Article 127 permitted the owner of a property to leave it to only one heir, with a money payment to the others. Under Article 133 a landowner was allowed to declare indivisible an area up to 50 hectares. Article 120 reversed previous practice by

10. I. Mihalache, *Dreptul țăranilor la pământ, izlazuri și păduri* (Bucarest, 1922), pp. 129–130.

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423 permitting the sale of small property, on certain conditions and after five years. Article 122, however, limited purchases to 25 hectares in the hills and 100 hectares in the plains.[11]

423 185 In general, the 1921 law was more carefully drafted than that of 1918 and did attempt to remedy some of the technical errors of previous legislation. The economic effects of these land reforms, which together were reported officially to have expropriated nearly 2,800,000 hectares of land in the Old Kingdom, will be discussed in a later chapter.[12] The acts of 1918 and 1921 were, however, essentially defensive political rather than economic measures. As Mihalache said in his critique of the decree-law of 1918,

> it is not the work of a social concept, not the response to a social ideal, not the work of conviction; under the threat of the events of 1917, it is the continuation of a series of land settlements on the model of 1881 and 1889, it is the over-simplified concept that a new equilibrium between large property and small property must be stabilized in order that there be future peace.

In his opinion, "The ruling class has made only such concessions as were necessary to assure its own existence. The reforms have been a kind of safety valve." [13]

The safety valve, however, was successful. Despite its very precarious position, Rumania passed through the revolutionary storm in eastern Europe without an overthrow of the established order. Several reasons explain this success. A decisive factor, doubtless, was the flexibility of the ruling groups. Notwithstanding the obduracy of many members of the landed oligarchy and in spite of efforts to avoid or delay the reform, the landowners did at least yield sufficiently to prevent an outbreak. Their recalcitrance between 1917 and 1921 was in inverse ratio to the amount of peasant unrest. Moreover, the king, although conservative socially, was able to take the correct steps at two critical moments, in April, 1917, and in November, 1918.

423 185 668 Apart from the flexibility of the landowners, certain other forces were at work. Among the Conservatives, the stronghold of the landed interests, there were such men as Garoflid who recognized the failings of Rumanian agriculture and desired to make thorough-going changes, though along lines different from those followed. In the

11. For subsequent modifications, in 1923 and 1929, of these provisions for sale, see below, p. 125 and pp. 156–157.

12. The difficult task of discovering just what the land reforms accomplished in redistributing property is discussed below, pp. 48–49, and in the Appendix.

13. Mihalache, *op. cit.*, pp. 5, 29.

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Liberal party, the primary interest was in the expansion of industry, commerce, and finance, and since 1913 the party had officially stood for expropriation. In several respects the Liberal position was unfortunate since it had neither the reforming zeal of the new Peasant party nor the Conservatives' interest in the improvement of agriculture. The Liberals tended to regard land as a bone to be thrown to the peasants when the howls of the latter seemed menacing or detrimental to the national interest. Such a view was apt to neglect the economic aspects of the agrarian problem and to reduce it to a question of finding more land for distribution. Nevertheless, this Liberal attitude did make for change. Finally, once the question of land reform became the order of the day, the mere pressure of politics led the parties, if only for electoral reasons, to make the appearance of favoring reform.

A second factor was that the land laws, despite delays and omissions, were sufficiently extensive to pacify the peasants. A great deal of land changed hands, and the Rumanian reform was the most far-reaching of all the postwar agrarian measures in eastern Europe (excluding Russia, of course).

A third factor was concern for the national interest, which, as noted above, has usually been of primary importance in determining Rumanian internal policy. Notwithstanding military defeats, enormous human losses, and devastation of land, Rumania emerged from the war a victorious power with doubled population and territory.[14] The mere fact of being victorious and having achieved the national aim of Greater Rumania undoubtedly served to mitigate social tensions. The parties were in agreement in glorifying and protecting the new national unity; since Rumania was surrounded by states from which it had obtained territory, the defense of the new frontiers was a major concern of all postarmistice governments.

The very violence of the Russian Revolution, particularly the Bolshevik Revolution, served to create an opposing reaction in Rumania, heightened by the territorial dispute over Bessarabia. The political parties, including the Peasant party, were exceedingly hostile to bolshevism, which became the ultimate term of abuse in political debates. Mihalache had been sent to Bessarabia during the war to carry on antibolshevist propaganda, and one of his appeals for a more extensive land reform was that in the future the peasants should not be tempted to look beyond Rumania's frontier on the Dniester for better conditions. Fear of Soviet communism was one of the cardinal fea-

14. The area of Rumania in 1913 was 137,900 square kilometers; in 1919, 294,000 square kilometers. Its population in 1913 was 7,625,000; in 1919, 15,500,000.

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423 185 668 tures of Rumanian policy for the next twenty-five years, and in the international councils Rumania was to stress its role as the European bulwark against bolshevism.[15]

175 423 ## *Agrarian Reform in the New Territories*

Thus far only the agrarian reform in the Old Kingdom has been considered, and it does provide the central thread of the agrarian question in the interwar period. But as a result of the war Rumania also acquired Bessarabia from Russia, Bucovina from Austria, and Transylvania from Hungary. The agrarian problems in these three provinces were different in several respects from that of the Old Kingdom; the separate laws passed for each of the provinces further increased the complexity of the Rumanian agrarian situation after the First World War.

1. BESSARABIA

Bessarabia, which had formed a part of the principality of Moldavia, was ceded by the Turks to Russia in 1812 at the Treaty of Bucarest, in return for the evacuation of the remainder of Moldavia and Wallachia.[16] Three southern districts were returned to Moldavia after the Crimean War, but reverted to Russia after the War of 1877. The population was predominantly Rumanian, though large numbers of Ukrainians and Bulgarians inhabited the southern districts. In the last decades of the nineteenth century the tsarist regime undertook to Russify Bessarabia but without marked success. The Moldavian boyars in Bessarabia were notoriously obscurantist, and the province was a "natural breeding ground of such movements as the Black Hundreds." [17]

15. F. Borkenau, in his study, *The Communist International* (London, 1938), p. 99, attaches great importance to the Rumanian agrarian reform in this connection: "The agrarian reform in Rumania was perhaps the strongest single obstacle that opposed the advance of Bolshevism towards the West. It was very far from solving all problems, even for the peasantry, but for a decade it took the sharp edge off them. Revolutionary trends among the proletariat remained, but the proletariat alone was nothing in Rumania, and revolutionism among its members was more of a convulsion than a clearly defined movement."

16. The current Soviet interpretation of this event appears to be that in the eighteenth century the Moldavian and Wallachian boyars had sought the incorporation of the principalities in Russia as the sole means of escaping the Turkish yoke. This act of liberation was taking place during the Turko-Russian war of 1806. The threat of Napoleon, however, forced Tsar Alexander to come to terms with the Turks, so that only Bessarabia was fortunate enough to be liberated and incorporated in the tsarist empire. See A. Dolnik, *Bessarabiya pod vlastyu Rumynskikh boyar, 1918–1940 gg.* (Moscow, 1945), p. 5.

17. R. W. Seton-Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 563.

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Although the general agrarian structure of Bessarabia resembled that of the Old Kingdom, certain differences developed during the century of Russian control. The emancipation of 1861 corresponded roughly to the Cuza reform, but the allotted land, *nadyel*, was given over not to the peasant but to the peasant commune, the mir. While the Bessarabian allotments at the time of the emancipation were greater than for most parts of Russia, there was, as in Rumania, an increasing land hunger arising from the nature of the reform and the rapidly expanding population. The Stolypin reforms, after the 1905 revolution, worked to increase individual peasant ownership and to break up the mir, but by the outbreak of the war nadyel land still constituted the largest category of property. In Russia after 1907 the sale of land to the peasants by the large landowners was widespread and especially so in Bessarabia. Although a comparison of the pre-1914 distribution of property in Bessarabia with that in Rumania is difficult to make since the Russian returns were based upon distinctions between types of ownership rather than size, the general order of the problem was similar in the two regions.[18]

The history of Bessarabia's incorporation into Rumania is still bitterly controversial. Only the major developments can be sketched here. Immediately after the February Revolution, two political currents began to emerge in Bessarabia, an agrarian-revolutionary (which tended to be hostile to Rumania as a land dominated by boyars) and a nationalist-Moldavian. From July, 1917, the peasants began to seize land, and by the end of the year some two-thirds of the large property had been taken over. A military committee, representative of the Moldavian element, convoked a congress which, on October 21–23, 1917, passed a resolution in favor of the "historical and political autonomy" of Bessarabia and decided to convoke a national council (*Sfatul Ţării*). The situation was utterly disorganized by the October Revolution and the Ukrainian break with the Bolsheviks. The *Sfat*, which was strongly Moldavian nationalist, was opposed to the centralism of the new Bolshevik regime. On December 2, 1917, it announced the formation of a Democratic Moldavian Republic as a self-governing unit in the Federative Democratic Russian Republic.

A crisis was reached in January, 1918, when Rumanian troops, sent to Bessarabia at the request of the Sfat, ousted the Bolshevik Soviets which had gained power in several cities and had attempted to supersede the Sfat. Shortly thereafter, the Sfat proclaimed the independence of the Moldavian republic. When Rumania sued for peace in March, 1918, the Germans favored the Rumanian interest

18. For statistics on land distribution in Bessarabia see the Appendix.

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in Bessarabia. On April 9, 1918, the Sfat by open vote—86 to 3, with 36 delegates abstaining—declared for the union of Bessarabia with Rumania, but with important reservations: the Bessarabian land reform was to be maintained and the province was to have administrative autonomy.[19]

In Bessarabia, unlike the Old Kingdom, the redistribution of land was achieved by the direct action of the peasants. As a consequence, there were doubts, to say the least, among the cultivators as to the desirability of uniting with Rumania. Mihalache reported that the Bessarabian peasants said to him, "We will not unite with Rumania, since Rumania belongs to the *ciocoi*, who have fleeced the peasants."[20] Before Bessarabia was united with Rumania, however, there was a retreat from the first wave of land seizures. The Sfat succeeded in retaining 50 hectares for each proprietor, and subsequently the area was increased to 100 hectares. The land reform law proposed by the Sfat was subsequently ratified in Rumania by the decree-law of December 22, 1918, but 47 of the 73 articles of this decree-law were later modified by the law adopted by the Rumanian assembly in 1920.

The Bessarabian reform as finally drafted expropriated in full: former state and crown domains, mortmain estates, monastic properties (except one-half hectare for each monk), estates belonging to towns (except land reserved for town planning), estates of foreigners, and estates farmed out for five successive years. One million hectares were to be expropriated from private property, including all properties above 100 hectares (multiple holdings were counted as one property). Peasant allotments were set at 6–8 hectares, with complementary lots for peasants lacking the minimum. Compensation was based on rent obtained in the period 1910–14, capitalized at 5½ per cent. The price of the land, in general, was set at 800 lei per hectare, over the protests of the peasants who maintained that they had obtained the land through the revolution. The state assumed 25 per cent of the price. According to official Rumanian statistics, the total area expropriated was about 1,492,000 hectares.[21]

19. The Bessarabian controversy has centered on the actions of the Sfat: whether it was representative and whether its decisions reflected the wishes of the people. In the Soviet view, the Sfat was merely the tool of the landlord counterrevolutionaries, and the ousted Soviets the true representatives of the peasant masses. Dolnik, *op. cit.*, p. 20. There have been doubts as to the validity of the vote of April 9, 1918, and assertions that it was made under Rumanian military pressure. The high number of abstentions and the open vote would lead to the suspicion that it was scarcely an ideal referendum.

20. *Proectul legei de impropriştărirea ţăranilor*, (Bucarest, 1920), p. 54. Ciocoi was the peasant's term for the boyar's pack of retainers.

21. For further statistics on the Bessarabian land reform see the Appendix.

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It has been held that Bessarabia provided a revolutionary leaven for the rest of Rumania. To a degree this is true. Even before the First World War both socialist and populist theories were transmitted from Russia to Rumania through Bessarabia. The Bessarabian land reform had an effect upon the policy of the nascent Rumanian Peasant party; the exposé de motifs of the Peasant party's reform bill of 1920 argued that the law passed by Sfatul Țării for Bessarabia made equally extensive measures mandatory for all of Rumania. Mihalache, in defending his bill, pointed out that the Bucarest assembly was unwilling to accept for the Old Kingdom measures they had previously ratified for Bessarabia, and asked whether the impression was to remain that the Bessarabian peasant had achieved more for himself through revolution than had the peasant of the Old Kingdom through the good offices of the parliament.[22]

But the radical influences coming from Bessarabia were less than the contrary influence of Rumania upon Bessarabia. Successive formulations and arrangements regarding Bessarabia progressively reduced the extent of the agrarian reform, took away the administrative autonomy of the province, and extended the centralized administration of Bucarest. As a result, regardless of the original sentiment favoring incorporation in Rumania, Bessarabia was a disaffected area throughout the interwar period, with much the most corrupt administration of any Rumanian province.

2. BUCOVINA

Bucovina, which had formed the northern portion of the principality of Moldavia, was ceded by the Turks to Austria in 1775. The population was originally largely Rumanian; in 1848 Rumanians numbered 209,000 as against 108,000 Ruthenians. This proportion altered in subsequent decades until by 1910 the Ruthenians were the largest group, though not a majority, outnumbering the Rumanians 305,000 to 233,000. There were also some 102,000 Jews and 66,000 Germans at that date. In general, the Ruthenian population was concentrated in the northern part of Bucovina, the Rumanian in the south.

By the treaty of alliance of August 17, 1916, between the Allies and Rumania, the latter was to receive all of Bucovina to the Prut River. At the time of the peace conference, it was suggested that part of northern Bucovina be included, for ethnic reasons, in eastern Galicia. This suggestion was dropped with the collapse of Galician au-

22. *Proectul legei de impropietărirea țăranilor*, pp. 29 and 58.

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175 tonomy because of the desire not to increase the number of Ukrainians under Polish rule. The incorporation of Bucovina had none of the turbulence that accompanied Bessarabia's. A general congress met on November 28, 1918, and voted for union with Rumania.

311 Before the First World War, of the cultivable area of Bucovina, holdings over 100 hectares occupied 25 per cent, holdings between 10 and 100 hectares 27 per cent, and small holdings 48 per cent. (If the very extensive forest lands are included the holdings over 100 hectares covered more than 60 per cent of the surface of the province.) Large properties were less dominant than in the Old Kingdom and medium properties much more important, partly because of German colonization and efforts by the Austrian government to foster this category of holding.

● 423 The decree-law of September 7, 1919, for the Bucovina land reform was ratified by the law of July, 1921, which modified the decree in favor of the landowners and reduced the extent of land to be expropriated. Land reform in Bucovina was made under more peaceful circumstances than elsewhere and was more carefully worked out. The state was given a right to reserve land for general needs, and the landowner was allowed continued use of his land until it was actually taken over. The reform expropriated in full: estates of foreigners and absentees, mortmain estates, estates of persons who had lost their civil rights, and estates farmed out for more than nine years. Expropriation of private properties was on a sliding scale beginning at 100 hectares and permitting a maximum of 250 hectares on properties having considerable inventory and equipment. Scattered properties belonging to the same owner were counted as one. The allotment of land was made in lots of 4–8 hectares, colonization lots of 5 hectares, and complementary lots of not less than ¼ hectare for peasants having less than 4 hectares. Compensation to landowners was approximately the same as in the Old Kingdom, and the state assumed 50 per cent of the cost. The peasant could pay in whole or in part, the remainder becoming a mortgage payable in 50 years at 5 per cent. According to official statistics the total area expropriated in Bucovina was about 76,000 hectares.[23]

3. TRANSYLVANIA

175 The disputed history of Transylvania and the endless controversy that has raged between the Rumanians and the Hungarians

23. For further statistics on the distribution of land in Bucovina and the effects of the land reform see the Appendix.

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are far too complex for inclusion here. Whatever the origins of the Transylvanian population, at the outbreak of the First World War the Rumanians constituted a majority of the inhabitants of this region; with the collapse of Austria-Hungary, the Transylvanian Rumanians, along with the other ethnic groups in the empire moved to break away. On October 12, 1918, the Rumanian National party of Transylvania drafted a resolution demanding the right of self-determination. A national assembly was called at Alba Iulia on December first and passed a resolution in favor of the union of all Rumanians. The basis of this union was to be:

1) full national liberty for all races;
2) full autonomy for all regions;
3) a democratic regime with general, direct, equal, and secret elections;
4) complete liberty of press, assembly, and association;
5) radical agrarian reform;
6) equitable conditions for industrial workers.

A Governing Council (*Consiliul Dirigent*), under Iuliu Maniu, was established as the temporary administration. The Treaty of Trianon assigned Transylvania and the adjacent regions of Maramureş, Crişana, and the Banat to Rumania.

Servile tenures had been abolished somewhat earlier in Transylvania than in the Old Kingdom, and the relative importance of medium properties reflected the generally higher level of cultivation. Nevertheless, there was a great disparity between large and small properties, a disparity intensified by the national question. The Rumanians were almost entirely peasants, and most of the large estates belonged to Hungarians. Reliable information, however, is lacking regarding the distribution of land either by size of property or by nationality; according to Hungarian critics of Rumanian statistics, no exact figures have ever been available for the land distribution in 1919 in the total area annexed by Rumania.[24] The Rumanians have claimed that they held only 24 per cent of the total area and that 98 per cent of the properties over 100 cadastral yokes (the yoke, used in Transylvania, equals .58 hectares) were held by non-Rumanians. While this claim may have been extreme, Hungarian sources grant that 87 per cent of the owners of properties exceeding 100 yokes were Magyars.

The project for the land reform, prepared in thirty-two sittings of the Governing Council, became a decree-law on September 12,

24. C. A. Macartney, *Hungary and Her Successors* (Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 316, n. 2.

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671 1919, and was subsequently ratified by the law of July 23, 1921. In
● 423 Transylvania, where economic life was more advanced and extensive cereal cultivation played a less dominant role than in the Old Kingdom, the agrarian reform while radical in intent was more broadly conceived and had numerous exceptions and exemptions. It expropriated in full: estates of foreigners, estates of certain public and private institutions, estates which had been leased for more than twelve consecutive years, and any estate land of more than 500 cadastral yokes. Below 500 yokes, land was expropriated on a sliding scale down to an exempted minimum of 200 yokes. If, however, further land were needed, property below 200 yokes could be expropriated. Multiple holdings by one proprietor were considered one. The size of allotments was not fixed. The order of preference was determined primarily by war service rather than by land need, but peasants owning more than 5 yokes were not to receive land until other demands had been satisfied. The Transylvanian reform went beyond the others in its provisions for communal woodlands, which were not created for the Old Kingdom, Bessarabia, and Bucovina until a law for the expropriation of forests was passed in 1924. Compensation for expropriated land was subject to less rigid limits and the payment to the landowner was prompter. According to official statistics about 1,664,000 hectares were expropriated in Transylvania.[25]

423 The Rumanian land reforms, in the years 1918–21, did not, then, represent a unified program but varied considerably, depending upon geographical differences, previous agrarian conditions, and political circumstances. The reforms in Bessarabia and Transylvania reflected the more revolutionary spirit in those provinces; the complexities of the Transylvanian law and the attempt to relate it to the whole economy correspond to the generally higher level of Transylvanian agriculture and the presence of a nascent industry.

Notwithstanding these differences, however, which make it impossible to give a simple summary of the agrarian reform, the laws have certain common features: they were all based on expropriation in the "public interest" for the purpose of increasing peasant properties and communal pastures; although the decline of the leu in the 1920's almost destroyed the value of the compensation, the reforms were not planned as confiscations; and despite economic provisions of varying merit, the laws were not primarily economic reforms but social measures designed to appease the peasants' land hunger. More-

25. For further statistics on the effects of the reform in Transylvania see the Appendix.

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over, the process of incorporating the new provinces into Greater Rumania did tend to level out the differences in the laws. The reform in the Old Kingdom was altered somewhat by the more radical atmosphere in the provinces. On the other hand, the Bessarabian, Bucovinan, and Transylvanian reforms were considerably modified by the time the parliament ratified them in 1921. National interest, as conceived of in Bucarest, demanded equilibrium, if not complete similarity, between the various agrarian laws.

An element of xenophobia, in the form of discrimination against foreign landowners and minorities, also appeared in the agrarian reforms and was the subject of the interminable case of the Hungarian optants, which was before the Council of the League of Nations throughout the 1920's. Unquestionably certain of the expropriation provisions were directed against the non-Rumanian minorities, and in Transylvania and Southern Dobrogea the execution of the reforms had a decidedly nationalist tinge. On the other hand, since the Rumanians in the new provinces usually included the poorest strata of the population, and many of the larger landowners were members of the minorities, it was inevitable that the leveling process of the land reforms should have benefited the Rumanians at the expense of the minorities. In any event, nationalist discrimination was a by-product of the land reforms, not a primary incentive.

At the conclusion of the First World War Rumania, in spite of terrible human and material losses, seemed to be entering a new and promising era. By an extraordinary combination of circumstances a united Greater Rumania had been achieved. The acquired territories with their resources and industry promised to add a new dimension to the Rumanian economy. The passage of the land reforms gave hope for greater social stability and the eventual growth of a prosperous peasant agriculture. The revolutionary fever subsided, the peasants had not revolted, a general strike of workers in 1920 had been successfully suppressed, and although new parties and politicians appeared on the scene, the continuity of the Rumanian monarchy and government stood unique in eastern Europe. But the two basic problems of Rumanian history remained: a weak power position and a backward economy. The first did not present an immediate threat because of the exhaustion of neighboring great powers through war and revolution. The task of adjusting the economy to a more advanced and rapidly changing world economy faced the nation immediately as Rumania began to repair the damage caused by the war.

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in the way of concrete benefits. Liberal agrarian policy can be divided under two heads: measures taken in supplementing or amending the agrarian reforms and measures for the improvement of agriculture.

Of the land reforms, only that for Translyvania had provided for the expropriation of forest land. Article 132 of the 1923 Constitution approved the principle of expropriating forest land in the Old Kingdom, Bessarabia, and Bucovina for firewood and construction purposes. The law implementing this article was published on July 1, 1924. Where woodland was needed and was not available from state holdings, it could be expropriated from private owners leaving them a minimum of 100 hectares. Communal woodlands were to be created, the exploitation of which was to be under the control of the state.[54]

By the law of March 13, 1925, and the executive regulation of April 15, which abrogated Articles 120–124 of the 1921 law, the Liberals, to safeguard peasant holdings, considerably stiffened requirements for the sale and purchase of agricultural property. The state was given the right of preemption on lands received not only under the 1918–21 reforms but under earlier distributions of state domain. If this right were not exerted, purchases could be made only on the following conditions:

1. The purchaser was to be a Rumanian citizen, a cultivator of the land or a graduate of an agricultural school, and residing and working in the commune in which the holding was situated.

2. Holdings could be sold in minimum blocs of 2 hectares in the plains and 1 hectare in the hills.

3. Sales could be made only five years after their owner had received definite title to his property following full payment of its price.

4. The purchaser could not own more than 25 hectares of cultivated land, including the area to be purchased. Houses and gardens, up to one hectare, could not be mortgaged or sold; land up to 25 hectares could be mortgaged only to certain authorized institutions.

The detailed instructions in the accompanying administrative regulation made the act of sale quite complicated by requiring numerous forms, proofs of domicile, and evidence of proper ownership. While the Liberals did not make peasant land inalienable they did render the process of transfer slower and more difficult and extended the state's rights of preemption to a large proportion of peasant properties. This law was in harmony with the tight-laced spirit of the Liberals in 1924–25 and showed the same restrictive view of property as the mining law of 1924. Historically, the reversion toward inalien-

54. See Diaconescu, *Chestiunea ţărănească în Romănia*, pp. 266–272, for analysis of the text of the law.

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423 665 656 241 671 ability was an aftermath of nearly all the land reform measures. It is characteristic of the liberalism of the Liberal party that it should have feared—though perhaps correctly—the consequences of free and uninhibited sales of land.[55]

665 241 The Liberals, in the law of April 14, 1925, instituted chambers of agriculture, modeled on the chambers of commerce, and united in a Union of Chambers of Agriculture. At first sight these organs appeared to have very important functions: to be the official representatives of agricultural interests, to give advice on agricultural legislation, to supervise agricultural schools, to collaborate with the administration in the application of laws, to improve livestock, to aid in the advancement of agricultural techniques, to prepare statistics, and to organize fairs. They were also to elect members to the senate.

Unhappily, the chambers accomplished very little. Their budgets depended upon the Ministry of Agriculture, and they were not supplied with sufficient funds to carry out the work delegated to them.[56] They were not even representative of the whole of the peasantry. Each chamber was composed of 17 elected members and 11 appointed functionaries. But since only proprietors with a minimum of 3 hectares of arable land, or tenants with 10 hectares were permitted to vote for members, a large percentage of the poor peasants was not represented at all.[57] (In 1930, 52 per cent of the peasant farms were of less than 3 hectares.) Worst of all, the chambers, with their right to elect senators, became hopelessly entangled in politics. Under the law creating them, the government could dissolve the chambers for serious irregularities or bad faith in the accomplishment of their legal work or for activities against the interests of the state. Inevitably, the chambers were repeatedly dissolved on any pretext for the purpose of facilitating the election of senators.

665 656 241 In May, 1928, the Liberals passed a law for the classification of cereals, designed to improve the quality of grain destined for export and to reduce the number of middlemen between producer and foreign consumer. There had been frequent complaints of the inferior quality of exported Rumanian grain and the presence of an excessive amount

55. In 1911 the Liberal program has spoken of the desirability of creating a medium property by natural selection, that is, by the purchase and sale of land. The 1924 law certainly represents a retreat from that position. On the other hand, as will be seen below, the National Peasants revised the 1925 law, for the purpose of permitting "natural selection," but with unfortunate results for the poorer peasants.

56. F. E. Manoliou, *La Reconstruction économique et financière de la Roumanie et les partis politiques* (Paris, 1931), p. 159.

57. Filip Chefner, "Camerile agricole în România," *M.A.B.: Bulletin du Bureau International Agraire*, 2 (1926), 86.

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241 as 1910 Dobrogeanu-Gherea had some harsh words to say of the
433 men who thought it could magically solve the deep-rooted ills of Ru-
654 manian agriculture.[36]

The Tătărescu government, following precedent, also reorganized agricultural credit and the cooperative system, set up more experimental stations, and devoted funds to the raising of better livestock and the purchase of tractors, but those measures seem to have been only of marginal benefit.

● 423 The government did try in the law of March, 1937, for the encouragement of agriculture to grapple with the problem of land tenure. It regulated the transfer and mortgage of rural lands and undertook to enforce the indivisibility of property as a means of preventing the progressive subdivision of peasant holdings. The effort was unsuccessful. The two-hectare minimum, which in any case was too small for a self-subsistent holding, was not observed; the prohibition extended only to properties obtained from the state or with the state's assistance. An attempt was also made to promote the consolidation of peasant properties, but this met with too great opposition in the chamber and was dropped.[37] The government also exerted its right of preemption on sales of agricultural land for the purpose of providing land for the peasants but its achievements were insignificant. Between April 1, 1934, and August 1, 1938, of the 326,200 hectares put on sale the government used its right of preemption on only 12,250 hectares, 3.8 per cent of the total.[38]

241 In brief, if the position of agriculture was somewhat better in the
654 years of the Tătărescu regime than in the depression it was largely
656 a consequence of general economic recovery. Agriculture did benefit from the protective measures applied and extended by the government, although part of these benefits was lost by the continued depreciation of the leu, and some efforts were made to raise the level of agriculture and diversify production. Nevertheless, the government's chief interest was industry and commerce and the principal benefits to agriculture were those which corresponded to this interest. The desperate problem of the millions of small peasants owning less than 3 hectares, unable to support themselves and their families, dividing their land into smaller and smaller fragments, suffering from pellagra —this problem was scarcely touched.

654 It must be said, however, that in the 1930's there was a notable
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36. C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea, *Neoiobăgia*, p. 254.

37. Valeriu Bulgariu, "Divizibilitatea proprietăţii ţărăneşti," *Problema agrară* (Bucarest, 1946), pp. 77–97.

38. G. Ionescu-Sişeşti, "Le Nouvel Aspect du problème agraire en Roumanie," *Archives pour la science et la réforme sociales*, 16, Nos. 1–4 (1943), 264.

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185 ian overpopulation after 1921. Moreover, he granted that Rumanian
strip cultivation and dwarf holdings led to overpopulation because of
241 their economic inefficiency but he went on to say:

> The solution of this aspect of the Rumanian agrarian question cannot be achieved in the framework of small properties, nor in the framework of private property in land. It cannot find a solution either in individual or isolated fashion, but involves structural transformations which concern the whole of Rumanian society, hence far past the restricted limits of the agricultural sector properly speaking.[37]

In a word, for all his criticism of the "myth" of overpopulation Pătrăşcanu really provided no convincing evidence that it was not a real problem, nor could he. This point is important, because the propaganda for the subsequent 1945 agrarian reform was obviously based on similar premises.

In his proposal of remedies, he limited himself to immediate reforms, which were not socialist but which were intended to rid Rumania of fascism and restore a constitutional bourgeois society. For agriculture he advocated the complete expropriation of large properties over 50 hectares, the abolition of servile labor relations, the resettlement of landless peasants and peasants with insufficient land; distribution to the peasants of livestock and equipment obtained from the expropriated estates; cancellation of peasant debts to the banks and to the state. Other economic measures included the nationalization of the Rumanian Bank and the consolidation of the banking structure; state control over cartels and the nationalization of certain combines; an eight-hour day for labor, minimum wages, social security, and protective legislation. For a Communist it was certainly a minimum program.

In explaining this program, Pătrăscanu relied upon the ideas of Lenin of 1900. The whole of the peasantry—while carrying within itself the latent conflict between poor peasant and the kulak—was the adversary of large property, although for a number of different reasons. In some European states peasant solidarity was no longer possible, but in Rumania there still remained a substantial antiboyar spirit common to poor and rich peasant alike.

The Agrarian Reform of 1945

241 Rumanian agriculture was disorganized after the defeat of 1944,
● 423 although as always the very backwardness of peasant farming re-
185 duced the shock. The war had depleted stocks of grain, draft animals,

37. Pătrăşcanu, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

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and equipment. There had been fighting during the spring and summer over a wide strip of Moldavia, and less extended fighting was going on in Transylvania. The German army had retreated, the Red Army had marched through the country. There had been a considerable dislocation of population, and many landowners had fled from their estates in Moldavia and Bucovina.

Despite these unsettled conditions there was initially very little peasant action. There were cases of peasants taking land, primarily from absentee owners or those who had fled the Russian advance. But as late as January, 1945, at Botoşani in northern Moldavia—a region bordering the Soviet Union and which had been under Soviet control since the preceding spring—an agreement was reached, with the approval of the local Soviet commander, whereby landowners who had left their estates could return to them, provided they agreed to operate them personally and not as absentees.[38]

When the National Democratic Front began its drive to power in February, 1945, the calm was broken. In September, 1944, the Rumanian Communist party had put forward a demand, incorporated in the program of the National Democratic Front, for the expropriation of land over 50 hectares. Even before Groza and the Communists came into office peasant committees in the villages began taking over large estates. While this display of zeal, in most instances initiated by local organs of the Ploughmen's Front, was authentic in the sense that it corresponded to the primordial land hunger of the Rumanian peasant, it in no way reflected a revolutionary situation. The peasants in the winter of 1944 were not in a gay frame of mind; they were poor, heartily sick of the war which had cost many of them their sons, not to speak of their horses, cattle, and equipment. They were tired of troops—German, Russian, and Rumanian—marching by and requisitioning. They did not like the old order, they hated the local gendarmes but they were not in a revolutionary frame of mind. They welcomed land but they were not in a rick-burning mood.[39] The premature seizures of land before any law had been passed were merely part of the mock revolution the National Democratic Front was undertaking.

One of the first acts of the Groza government after its tumultuous rise to power was to promulgate a decree-law, on March 22, 1945, for a land reform.[40] According to Article 1 of this law, "Agrarian reform

38. This may seem surprising, but I saw the agreement in the prefecture at Botoşani.

39. Such at least was my impression after traveling though some 30 judeţe in December and January, 1944–45.

40. A text of the law is given in a pamphlet published by the Rumanian Ministry of Information, *La Réforme agraire en Roumanie* (Bucarest, November, 1946).

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is a national, economic, and social necessity for our country. Rumanian agriculture should be based upon sound and productive farms, which are the private property of those who cultivate them."

The stated purposes of the reform were:

a) the enlargement of the cultivable area of existing peasant farms which were less than 5 hectares;

b) the creation of vegetable gardens in the environs of cities, for workers, civil servants, and artisans;

c) the creation of new individual private farms for agricultural laborers without land;

d) the use of certain land for model farms and experimental stations, to be administered by the state.

The following land was to be expropriated:

a) all properties belonging to German citizens and to Rumanian citizens of German ethnic origin who had collaborated with Hitler Germany;

b) the properties of war criminals and those responsible for the "disaster of the country";

c) properties of those who had fled to countries with which Rumania was at war and of those fleeing after August 23, 1944;

d) the land of absenteeists (excluding persons on official business abroad, or absent by necessity, or workers who had gone abroad and who had less than 10 hectares);

e) properties of those who during the last seven years had not cultivated the land themselves (excepting those with less than 10 hectares);

f) properties of those who had volunteered to fight against the United Nations;

g) mortmain lands;

h) lands of private owners in excess of 50 hectares, including arable, orchards, meadows, ponds, marshes, and inundated land. The proprietor was permitted to select which 50 hectares he was to retain but it had to be in one place. Multiple properties and properties of husband and wife were considered as one.

All tractors, threshing machines, sowing machines, and combines found on expropriated land were to pass to the state for the creation of agricultural machine stations. Other equipment and livestock was to go to the state for redistribution to the peasants. Expropriation of inventory and livestock was to be in proportion to the amount of the proprietor's land expropriated.

The law exempted from expropriation rice fields, church and monastic properties, crown lands, and lands belonging to certain specified

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cultural and philanthropic institutions, urban communes, and cooperatives.

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The mayor of each commune was directed to call a general assembly of all peasants having less than 5 hectares. This assembly was to elect a local committee of 7–15 members. These committees, whose actions were to be coordinated by a district committee operating with the Ministry of Agriculture, were to draw up lists of land to be expropriated and of peasants who were entitled to receive land.

Priority in the distribution of land was as follows:

a) cultivators mobilized in the anti-Hitler war;
b) widows, orphans, and invalids of this war;
c) widows, orphans, and invalids of any war;
d) landless peasants;
e) agricultural laborers and peasants who had worked on the land expropriated;
f) peasants with less than 5 hectares.

A necessary condition for all categories, however, was that the recipient lack 5 hectares of land.

Expropriation was without compensation. The price of the new lots was to be equal to the annual average harvest of one hectare, that is, 1,000 kilograms of wheat or 1,200 kilograms of maize. The new proprietors were to pay immediately in money or in kind 10 per cent of the purchase price, the remainder to be paid in ten years for peasants with little land and in twenty years for landless peasants. Landless peasants could obtain a three years' moratorium on the payment of their first installment.

Holdings created under this law could not be divided, sold, leased or mortgaged, either in whole or in part, except in certain special cases, with the authorization of the Ministry of Agriculture. The new land was received without obligations.

Lands expropriated and divided before the promulgation of this law were to be made to conform with its provisions.

By a subsequent administrative regulation certain large properties could be exempted from expropriation, if they were well-organized enterprises, suitable to serve as model farms under the direction of the Ministry of Agriculture; even these farms, however, were not to exceed 150 hectares.

For a number of reasons it is difficult to ascertain the results of the law in terms of the redistribution of land. Expropriation began before the law was promulgated, and although the irregularities in its application were not as great as some of the dispossessed landowners made out, there was a good deal of uncontrolled seizure and redistri-

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241 bution. A reform carried out so brusquely and through the agency of local peasant committees was bound to be a hectic procedure and not likely to be very accurately recorded. As has been mentioned already the statistics on the 1918–21 reform, even those presented officially, were far from accurate, and there is no reason to believe that the figures on the 1945 reform are a bit more reliable. Indeed, it is quite obvious that some of the figures were rigged for political purposes.

As of January, 1947, according to official announcement, 1,443,911 hectares had been expropriated under the 1945 reform from 143,219 proprietors; 1,057,674 hectares had been distributed to the peasants and 387,565 hectares held as state reserve. Of the 1,114,888 peasants having claims, 796,129 had received land.[41] The average area expropriated was only 10 hectares. Of the number of peasants having claims 72 per cent received land. The average amount received per peasant was about 1.3 hectares. In magnitude this reform—if the figures are at all comparable—by no means equaled the 1918–21 reforms. For roughly the equivalent area (i.e., minus Bessarabia, though including Northern Bucovina and Southern Dobrogea), the first reform had expropriated 4,312,911 hectares, 2,824,962 hectares had been distributed to 1,036,367 peasants, an average of 2.7 hectares per peasant.

The regional results of the 1945 reform correspond to the nature of the terrain, with the notable exception of Transylvania. In the mountainous overpopulated areas the average allotment was very small: 0.6 hectares in the Moldavian Carpathians, 0.7 hectares in the Wallachian Carpathians, and 0.5 hectares in Bucovina. In Dobrogea, which was relatively sparsely settled, the peasants received an average of almost 3 hectares. An interesting feature of the reform is that while in most of the regions the average area of land expropriated was relatively large (over 130 hectares in the Moldavian Plain, 111 hectares in the Danube Plain, 57 hectares in Dobrogea, and 58 hectares in Bucovina) the average area expropriated was only 5.5 hectares in the Transylvanian Plateau and 5 hectares in the Tisa Plain. Of the total number of expropriations over nine-tenths were in Transylvania, although the area expropriated in that province was only about one-half the total. Clearly this meant the expropriation of numerous properties well under 50 hectares and presumably reflects the forced reduction of the German communities in Transylvania.[42]

41. Institutul Central de Statistică, *Communicări statistice, Nr. 17, 15 martie 1947* (Bucarest, 1947), p. 9.

42. The extensive German settlements in Transylvania, many of which had been there

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In January, 1948, the Statistical Institute of the new Rumanian People's Republic undertook an agrarian census to ascertain the distribution of land after the 1945 reform. Unfortunately, this census does not permit satisfactory comparison with that of 1941. It presents a table, comparing the number of agricultural exploitations in the various categories of size for 1941 and 1948, which shows, as might be expected, a decrease in the number of dwarf holdings under ½ hectare and of large holdings over 20 hectares, and a marked increase in the number of exploitations between 1 and 5 hectares. However, since the amount of area occupied by these categories of exploitations is not given and it is unclear whether the same types of land (especially forests and pastures) are included in both cases, the comparison is not very illuminating and may be misleading.[43] It was obvious, however, that the land reform of 1945 did not, as it could not, create a nation of prosperous small-holders. Indeed, the conclusion reached as to the size of Rumanian exploitations has a very familiar ring: "If 3 hectares represents in general the minimum lot necessary to sustain by farming a household of 4 persons, then more than half of the agricultural exploitations of Rumania fall short of this level and are obliged to have recourse to outside income." [44] To be sure, this sour note was not the one prevailing in 1945 and 1946, when the reform was being pushed through, but anticipated the new agrarian line taken up in 1948.

In judging the 1945 land reform, it is necessary to realize, however, that it was not a Rumanian reform but had its sources in the Soviet Union, and that its immediate aims were political not economic.

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for hundreds of years, were greatly reduced by the wholesale transfer of nearly the entire able-bodied population to the Soviet Union in the winter of 1944–45. Undoubtedly a high percentage of the Germans had been actively pro-Nazi, but the Soviet order paid no attention to any such criteria.

43. Number of agricultural exploitations (excluding Northern Transylvania):

		1948		1941	
Size of exploitation		*Number*	*Per cent*	*Number*	*Per cent*
Total		2,596,900	100.0	2,303,472	100.0
0–½	hectare	190,169	7.3	277,500	12.0
½–1	"	246,016	9.5	213,088	9.3
1–3	"	933,383	35.9	760,700	33.0
3–5	"	604,540	23.3	441,213	19.2
5–10	"	462,607	17.8	449,716	19.5
10–20	"	122,262	4.7	116,537	5.1
20–50	"	26,607	1.0	27,845	1.2
Over 50	"	11,316	0.4	16,873	0.7

A. Golopenţia and P. Onica, *Recensământul agricol din Republica Populară Română, 25 Ianuarie 1948. Rezultate provizorii*, Institutul Central de Statistică (Bucarest, 1948). For further details of the 1948 census see the Appendix. It appears that a good deal more land was included in this census than in 1941.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

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● 423 178 Although it was represented as the manifestation of the wishes of the broad masses of the Rumanian peasantry, it seems evident that the main outlines of the law were not drafted in Rumania at all but in Moscow. A comparison of the texts of the Rumanian land reform law with those for the provincial administrations of the Soviet Zone of Germany, passed in the summer of 1945, reveals striking parallels. With the exception of the size of property subject to expropriation (in Germany properties over 100 hectares were to be expropriated), the laws were altogether similar and in certain sections employed identical phrases.[45] Whatever the merits or faults of the reform, it was not a local measure but part of a more general agrarian policy being prepared for a much larger area.

In its general lines and intentions the agrarian reform clearly derives from Lenin's interpretation of class relations in a predominantly agrarian society: the need of eradicating the feudal remnants and of gaining the support of the peasantry by fulfilling its desires for land. In its specific context it was an important part of the National Democratic Front's attempt to obtain mass support in its political campaign. As a means of obtaining positive popularity among the peasants it may be doubted whether it was a great success, and there is no satisfactory evidence that it won the Groza government an enthusiastic peasant following. In the first place, it was physically impossible to grant the Rumanian peasant sufficient land to make him a satisfied and prosperous cultivator. Moreover, the peasants have always felt that the land was theirs and they have never shown themselves particularly grateful to those who pareceled it out. On the other hand, the Communists' interest in winning over the peasantry should not be understood as merely a desire to gain popularity. The whole purpose of Lenin's peasant policy was to "neutralize" the peasantry at critical junctures in the party's progress so as to make sure it did not become actively hostile. As such a guarantee it was, perhaps, more successful.

The importance of the agrarian reform in eradicating feudal residues was indirect rather than direct. The Communists undoubtedly

45. Cf. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, September 12, 1945, which gives an account of the German laws. Both reforms started with the same formula that agrarian reform was a national, economic, and social necessity. In both laws local committees of poor peasants were to prepare the land lists, peasants with less than 5 hectares were entitled to land, payment could be in money or kind, with a 10 per cent payment the first year, although poor peasants could obtain a three-year moratorium. The price of the lots was the equivalent of one year's produce. New properties could not be sold, mortgaged, leased, or broken up. Farm machinery was to be placed in a common pool. These similarities are obviously no coincidence, and it is certainly unlikely that the German provincial administrations should have copied the Rumanian land reform independently.

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exaggerated the economic importance of the boyars and the extent of their holdings. Nevertheless, a certain boyar spirit still prevailed in Rumania and the fact of land ownership continued to be a mark of prestige.[46] The agrarian reform, in this respect, was probably effective in removing one of the symbols, if not the real source of strength, of Rumania's traditional ruling group.

As an equalitarian measure the land reform undoubtedly has an emotional appeal. When one has followed the history of the agrarian question in Rumania and the way in which the landed interests held out against the peasants until forced to grudging compromises; when one has seen the peasant humbly removing his *căciulă* as the landowner passed, and has perceived the chasm between the peasant and his rulers, one is moved by a feeling that retributive justice has been done. Retributive justice, however, does not reconstruct a society, solve economic problems, or even guarantee that the peasant will not be burdened with a new master.

The immediate economic effects of the reform were unfavorable but should not be exaggerated. The law was applied in the midst of spring planting, and the carefully planned spontaneity of its execution undoubtedly caused a decline in production. Some well-organized large properties were broken up in the process, but on the whole the output of Rumanian large properties had not been very impressive and much of the land was let out. Their function as guides to improved cultivation could certainly be taken over by model farms.

In its professed aim of creating a prosperous peasant agriculture, the agrarian reform alone could have only marginal value, although it undoubtedly provided a temporary relief for a number of peasants. It did not solve the problems of overpopulation, low productivity, strip farming, and the progressive fragmentation of properties. Although the new allotments were not to be broken up, the reform did, by creating new small holdings, increase the area where fragmentation had been most destructive in the past. Essentially the agrarian reform was only the last step of a process which had been going on in Rumania since 1864—the gradual reduction of estate land and its conversion into peasant holdings. Unfortunately the process had been so slow that it could never be more than a palliative. As the final stage in this conversion the 1945 reform was of much less importance than its predecessor. It should not, however, be considered as merely a last step; for the Communists it was clearly a first step.

46. Moore, *Economic Demography of Eastern and Southern Europe*, p. 187, comments on the persistence of land ownership as a source of prestige and social position in these countries, and on the tendency of the successful tradesman or politician to acquire an estate.

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165 471 annulled. In the following months government administrators were appointed to supervise the British and American-owned oil companies, which action, in effect, put these firms in a state of forcible dissolution. The Rumanian industrialist, Nicolae Malaxa, who had made great efforts to accommodate himself to the Russians and the Groza regime, was unable to ride this new wave and his factories, the most important in the country, were also taken over. While, as has been seen, the Rumanian government has always worked in close conjunction with Rumanian industry—fostering desirable undertakings and even setting up state-owned enterprises—this new advance was under quite different auspices and had a far more ambitious intent.

The decisive step came in June, 1948, with a bill providing for the nationalization of all industrial, mining, banking, insurance, and transport concerns. The law at the outset affected some 1,068 enterprises, including 132 heavy industries, 20 coal mines, 25 oil and natural gas companies, 56 building material companies, 163 textile factories, 13 insurance companies, and 4 shipping concerns. While the law did not, in theory, deny compensation, it was to be based on profits, its amount was to be determined by a government commission, it was to be paid in state bonds, and would not be given to persons who "have enriched themselves illegally or left the country illegally." The motives given for the bill were largely political: the new situation demanded changes in the national economy; the bourgeoisie, which had been disarmed politically, must not be permitted to retain its potent economic weapons.

In November all privately owned health institutions, hospitals, sanatoria, and the film industry were nationalized. In April, 1949, the state took over a new batch of private companies, pharmacies, laboratories, drug and cosmetic factories. Thus, by the end of the year, a significant and certainly decisive sector of the economy was directly controlled and managed by the state.

● 423 The switch in agrarian policy came at a somewhat later date, though in 1946 and 1947 one finds mounting criticism of the predatory activity of the rich peasants and the sabotage committed by estate owners on the land remaining to them. A foreshadowing of a change in eastern European agriculture was given in a Russian broadcast of February 9, 1948, to Soviet farmers: "Today the governments of the new democracies know that the present small peasant holdings are not a paying proposition and that the peasants' road to wealth lies in co-operation and the uniting of small holdings into large collective estates. . . . The movement for setting up co-operative agriculture is growing apace

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culture is growing apace." [33] Nevertheless, in the spring of 1948 Gheorghiu-Dej was denying rumors that the land would be taken back from the peasants, and a decree in March permitted peasants possessing more land than they could till to employ day laborers.[34]

By the summer, however, the government was emphasizing the need of "sharpening the class struggle in the countryside, organizing agricultural laborers, and fighting the rich peasant." It introduced progressive scales of taxation and forced grain delivery aimed at preventing accumulation of grain or wealth by kulak or estate owner and ultimately undermining their economic position. It set up "village information offices" with instructions to "unmask all the dishonest kulaks and inform the farmers of their duties."

On March 2, 1949, the regime, on the simple sweeping charge of sabotage and failure to comply with regulations, seized the land, livestock, and inventory which had been left to the large landowners under the 1945 reform. In this action, carried out abruptly and without prior notification, some 17,000 families were evicted from their homes at night and sent to various resettlement areas. The government now directed all its energies against the rich peasants.[35] Lenin's dictum that "Small-scale exploitation generates capitalism and the bourgeoisie constantly, daily, hourly, in an elemental way, and on a mass scale," again made its appearance and became the leitmotiv for innumerable articles.

Embroidering on this theme, Gheorghiu-Dej marked out the party line for 1949. In 1945 the landlords had been liquidated as a class, but this act fostered small-scale economic activity in agriculture. "It follows that the complete victory of socialism is impossible so long as private property in the means of production, in the towns and in the countryside, including private property in land, continues to exist." The Communist party, therefore, had a number of important

33. *East Europe* (February 19, 1948).

34. *Ibid.* (April 1, 1948).

35. The distinction between poor, middle, and rich peasant, or kulak, is not based on size of holding or amount of wealth alone and seems to take on different meanings under different political circumstances. In simplest terms, the rich peasant is one who hires labor or charges rent for machinery and equipment; the middle peasant uses only family labor but produces enough, or more than enough, to support his household; the poor peasant is unable to support himself on his holding and is on the verge of drifting into the agricultural proletariat. In 1941, 12 per cent of the land in Rumania was farmed solely by paid labor, and 24.8 per cent by a mixture of paid and family labor. The first category, in the main, represented the properties of estate owners, the second the holdings of the richer peasants. In 1948, according to Gheorghiu-Dej, 57 per cent of the rural population belonged to the small peasantry and 33 per cent to the middle peasantry.

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tasks. The first was to restrict the kulaks and dislodge them from their position. Then it would be possible "when conditions are ripe, to pass over to the policy of the complete liquidation of the kulaks." [36] He anticipated, of course, that the kulaks would resort to underground struggle, sabotage, and criminal acts in an effort to avert their approaching fate.

The second task was to undertake propaganda convincing the poor and middle peasants of the need to unite in collective farms. When that task had been achieved, when all the land belonged to the collectives in perpetuity, the goal of making the land public property and bringing about the socialist transformation of the countryside would be reached. Gheorghiu-Dej emphasized, however, the necessity of making this transition gradually, by means of persuasion, and with the voluntary support of the peasant. The poor peasants should not be driven into collectives, the middle peasant should not be identified with the kulak, and the whole process must be paced by the development of agricultural machinery, machine tractor stations, and the expansion of the network of consumer and producer cooperatives as broad mass movements.[37] These words of caution presumably reflect the wisdom gained from the Soviet experiment in collectivization.

Gheorghiu-Dej concluded his remarks with the inevitable "self-criticism": in the past the party had not provided a clear political line for work in the countryside and had failed to popularize the notion of uniting the working peasantry into collective farms, and had even ignored or denied this goal.[38] That these so-called errors were the fault of the Rumanian Communists is, of course, nonsense. The party line, emanating from Moscow, had shifted, and in this instance a strong case can be made that the change had been planned long in advance. The Communists could have had no intention of stopping at the stage of small peasant cultivation which had, in any event, reached a cul-de-sac in Rumania.

The creation of collective farms got under way in 1949, and by the end of the year, according to the glowing account of a Russian visitor, 56 *kolkhozi* comprising 4,000 peasant families had been estab-

36. As in Russia representatives of the restricted and soon to be liquidated kulak class are not to be admitted to the collective farms.

37. The cooperatives, however, must rid themselves of capitalist elements, must intensify their collaboration with the state trading organs, and must promote the spirit of "socialist emulation" among the peasants.

38. G. Gheorghiu-Dej, "Tasks of the Rumanian Workers Party in the Struggle for the Socialist Reorganization of the Countryside," *For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy* (Bucarest, March 15, 1949).

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TABLE XIII. PREREFORM DISTRIBUTION OF LAND IN TRANSYLVANIA

Category (hectares)	Number of Owners	Per Cent	Area (hectares)	Per Cent
0–10	843,448	87.6	2,536,738	34
10–100	113,887	11.8	2,153,117	29
Over 100	4,601	0.6	2,751,457	37
	961,936	100.0	7,441,312	100

SOURCE: Nasta, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

COMMENT: The reliability of this official estimate is extremely doubtful. The table appears to be only an approximate conversion into hectares of figures compiled in cadastral yokes by the provisional Transylvanian government in 1919. The reliability of the latter compilation has been challenged. According to Hungarian critics "no exact figures are or ever have been available for the land distribution in 1919 in the total area annexed by Rumania." C. A. Macartney, *Hungary and Her Successors* (Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 316, n. 2.

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TABLE XIV. LAND EXPROPRIATED UNDER THE AGRARIAN REFORMS OF 1918 AND 1921, AS OF 1927

	Old Kingdom (hectares)	Transylvania (hectares)	Bucovina (hectares)	Bessarabia (hectares)	Total (hectares)
Arable	2,269,192.27	470,389.56	48,544.64	1,210,627.20	3,998,753.67
Meadow	27,286.94	80,745.60	9,742.63	—	117,875.17
Pasture	442,968.66	398,257.50	8,296.69	—	849,542.87
Forests	19,156.10	663,967.24	8,420.54	196,404.60	889,948.48
Orchards, Vineyards	2,466.18	12,114.07	—	—	14,580.25
Building land, farmyards, etc.	360.11	14,006.85	357.16	—	14,723.62
Barren	14,851.15	24,328.71	606.69	82,888.44	122,673.99
Total	2,776,401.43	1,663,809.06	75,967.35	1,491,920.24	6,008,098.05

SOURCE: Nasta, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

COMMENT: Despite the confident calculation to two decimal places, the accuracy of this table is rather uncertain. In 1937 the figure given for the total amount of expropriated land was somewhat less: 5,811,827 hectares. G. Ionescu-Sișești and N. Cornățeanu, *La Réforme agraire en Roumanie et ses conséquences* (Bucarest, 1937), p. 36. In 1940 it was officially announced that 3,900 estates were still in possession of land which was to have been expropriated. Moreover, there seems to have been a good deal of circumvention of the expropriation laws through the reconstitution of estates by a variety of semilegal or illegal means. According to Mitrany, *op. cit.*, p. 223, the Ministry of Agriculture confirmed that in the steppe region of the Bărăgan newly formed estates, running up to 3,000 hectares, could be found.

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TABLE XV. DISPOSITION OF LAND EXPROPRIATED UNDER AGRARIAN REFORMS OF 1918 AND 1921, AS OF 1927

	Old Kingdom (hectares)	Transylvania (hectares)	Bucovina (hectares)	Bessarabia (hectares)
Distributed to peasants	2,037,293.04	451,653.96	42,832.25	1,098,045.50
Communal pastures	524,720.87	418,361.43	5,831.85	—
Communal forests	—	484,805.24	4,877.72	—
Forests administered by state to be distributed	21,027.90	179,162.00	8,523.84	198,404.60
Land unfit for distribution	17,677.44	86,442.78	605.69	82,888.44
Reserved for general needs	175,682.18	93,383.62	13,796.00	112,581.70
Total expropriated	2,776,401.43	1,663,809.03	75,967.35	1,491,920.24

SOURCE: Nasta, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
COMMENT: The reliability of this table depends upon that of Table XIV.

TABLE XVI. LAND RECEIVED BY THE PEASANTS UNDER THE AGRARIAN REFORMS OF 1918 AND 1921

A. As of 1927

	Number of Peasants Entitled to Land	Number of Peasants Receiving Land	Area Distributed (hectares)	Area Distributed as Communal Pasture (hectares)	Area Distributed as Communal Forests (hectares)
Old Kingdom	1,053,628	630,113	2,037,293.04	524,720.87	—
Transylvania	490,528	310,583	451,653.96	418,361.43	484,805.24
Bucovina	77,911	71,266	42,832.25	5,831.85	4,877.72
Bessarabia	357,016	357,016	1,098,045.50	—	—
Total	1,979,083	1,368,978	3,629,824.75	948,914.15	489,182.96

SOURCE: *Ibid.*

B. As of 1938

	Number of Peasants with Right to Land	Number Receiving Land		Land Distributed (hectares)	Average Area per Peasant Receiving Land under Reform
		Number	*Per Cent of those with right*		
Old Kingdom	1,075,330	648,843	60.3	2,286,740	3.4
Transylvania	490,528	310,583	63.3	469,043	1.6
Bucovina	82,606	76,941	93.2	49,179	0.6
Bessarabia	357,016	357,016	100.0	1,098,045	3.1
Total	2,005,477	1,393,383	69.5	3,923,007	2.8

SOURCE: *60 Sate romdnesti* (5 vols., Bucarest, 1941–43), II, 10.

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TABLE XVII. DISTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURAL PROPERTY FOLLOWING THE AGRARIAN REFORMS OF 1918 AND 1921, AS OF 1927

Before the Reform:

	Small Property (under 100 ha.)	Per Cent	Large Property (over 100 ha.)	Per Cent
Old Kingdom	4,593,148	57.5	3,397,851	42.5
Bessarabia	2,337,811	55.9	1,844,539	44.1
Transylvania	4,689,855	63.0	2,751,457	37.0
Bucovina	405,000	78.0	115,000	22.0
	12,025,814		8,108,847	

or:

Small Property: 12,025,814 ha. or 59.77%
Large Property: 8,108,847 ha. or 40.23%
20,134,661 ha.

After the Reform:

	Small Property	Per-Cent	Large Property	Per Cent
Old Kingdom	7,369,549	92.22	621,450	7.78
Bessarabia	3,829,731	91.57	352,619	8.43
Transylvania	6,353,664	85.38	1,087,648	14.62
Bucovina	480,967	92.49	39,033	7.51
	18,033,911		2,100,750	

or:

Small Property: 18,033,911 ha. or 89.56%
Large Property: 2,100,750 ha. or 10.44%
20,134,661 ha.

SOURCE: Nasta, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–27.

COMMENT: Although these figures have been used as the basis for most studies of Rumanian agriculture, they are misleading and incorrect. The area estimated as having been expropriated from properties over 100 hectares (Table XIV) was simply subtracted from estimates of the prereform extent of such property and added to the estimates of properties under 100 hectares. The results are naturally quite impressive but unacceptable. The prewar figures for the Old Kingdom were based upon G. D. Creangă's estimate for 1905 (Table VIII) (except that the figure for properties under 10 hectares was taken from the somewhat higher estimate of the Ministry of Finance for 1905, a justified substitution). An estimated reduction of properties over 100 hectares between 1905 and 1918 (amounting to 412,500 hectares) was added to the 1905 figure for those below 10 hectares. As a result of this method of computation, the total area of medium properties, between 10 and 100 hectares, is assumed not to have changed at all between 1905 and 1927. All the land expropriated is considered to have been transferred to the small peasants, when, in fact, of the 2,776,000 hectares reported expropriated in the Old Kingdom, only 2,087,000 hectares of arable had been distributed to the peasants by 1927, and 525,000 hectares of communal grazing land established.

It has already been noted that the accuracy of estimates of prereform land distribution in Transylvania was doubtful. Only properties of over 100 hectares are reported

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to have suffered expropriation, although in Transylvania there were undoubtedly numerous cases where land under that figure was taken. In Bucovina, of the 75,967 hectares expropriated, some 23,000 were reported in 1927 to be either unfit for settlement or held as state-administered forest, and therefore cannot be regarded as having increased peasant holdings. In Bessarabia, all properties over 100 hectares were to have been expropriated; of the 1,845,000 hectares in this category, 1,492,000 were expropriated, and only 1,100,000 distributed to the peasants.

Finally, forest land is handled ambiguously. In Transylvania about 40 per cent (664,000 hectares) of the area expropriated from large estates was forest; in the Old Kingdom, however, the forests of large landowners—which were not expropriated but which in 1905 amounted to over 800,000 hectares in private ownership alone—were not included in the figures (this seems also to have been the case with the extensive forests of Bucovina). To have made the statistics consistent either all forest properties in all regions should have been included, which would have increased considerably the area shown as remaining to large properties after the reform, or they should have been omitted, which would have reduced the size of the area reported expropriated by nearly 900,000 hectares. In general, then, the conclusions were artificially established and certainly represent an inflated picture of the redistribution of property.

TABLE XVIII. FISCAL CENSUSES ON LANDHOLDINGS, 1923 AND 1928

Hectares	1923 Number of Taxpayers	1923 Area (hectares)	1923 Average Size (hectares)	1928 Number of Taxpayers	1928 Area (hectares)	1928 Average Size (hectares)
0–5	3,154,211	5,745,921	1.8	3,408,503	6,653,801	2.0
5–10	458,534	2,618,824	5.7	455,934	3,000,859	6.6
10–50	181,494	2,359,075	13.0	139,807	2,286,413	16.4
50–250	16,557	1,425,053	86.0	13,163	1,308,121	99.4
Over 250	3,168	1,537,046	485.1	1,834	861,299	469.4
Total	3,813,964	13,685,919	3.6	4,019,241	14,110,493	3.5

SOURCE: *60 Sate romdnesti*, II, 12–15.

COMMENT: Although these tables, prepared by the Ministry of Finance for tax purposes and using different categories of size of landholding, cannot be compared with earlier or later figures, they are of use in showing certain trends in land distribution in the 1920's. The 1928 figure for properties over 250 hectares seems very low, however, since a Ministry of Finance estimate for 1927 (given in Mitrany, *op. cit.*, p. 247) listed 2,597 owners in this category with an area of 1,305,672 hectares.

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TABLE XXIV. EXPROPRIATION AND REDISTRIBUTION OF LAND UNDER 1945 AGRARIAN REFORM, AS OF JANUARY 8, 1947

Regions	Number of Proprietors Expropriated	Area Expropriated (hectares)	Area Distributed (hectares)	Area Reserved by the State (hectares)	Peasants	
					Having right to land	*Having received land*
RUMANIA	143,219	1,443,911	1,057,674	887,565	1,114,888	796,129
Plains of Siret and Prut	1,542	196,130	162,486	33,644	196,608	160,334
Moldavian Carpathians	349	47,529	32,615	14,914	87,542	50,171
Muntenian and Oltenian Carpathians	1,802	115,065	71,214	51,851	178,618	99,088
Danube Plain	2,787	309,886	241,218	68,673	248,720	220,181
Dobrogea	1,122	62,333	52,089	3,562	34,795	18,165
Bucovina	79	4,610	4,412	198	17,707	8,518
Transylvanian Plateau	62,157	345,598	215,956	129,642	206,054	123,938
Tisa Plain	73,381	362,760	277,689	85,071	142,849	115,737

SOURCE: Institutul Central de Statistică, *Comunicări statistice*, No. 17 (March 15, 1947), p. 9.

TABLE XXV. DISTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURAL PROPRIETORSHIP AND EXPLOITATIONS AFTER 1945 AGRARIAN REFORM, AS OF JANUARY, 25, 1948

Categories of Size (hectares)	Proprietors		Exploitations	
	Number	*Per Cent*	*Number*	*Per Cent*
0–0.5	901,016	16.4	233,153	7.5
0.5–1	1,100,852	20.0	296,221	9.6
1–2	1,472,755	26.8	1,106,754	35.7
2–3	838,294	15.2		
3–5	697,218	12.7	707,001	22.8
5–10	363,679	6.6	531,090	17.3
10–20	88,355	1.6	153,516	5.0
20–50	23,696	0.4	34,222	1.1
Over 50	13,170	0.3	14,120	0.5
Total	5,501,139	100.0	3,096,177	100.0

SOURCE: A. Golopenţia and P. Onica, *Recensământul agricol din Republica Populară Română, 25 ianuarie 1948, rezultate provizorii* (Bucarest, 1948), pp. 11–16.

COMMENT: The value of this census is greatly reduced by the failure to publish the amount of land comprised in the various categories of properties and exploitations. Of a total area of 23,730,000 hectares, 20,661,000 were declared as properties and 19,199,000 hectares as exploitations (of which 94 per cent were declared as owned by the cultivator). The fact that there were 1.8 proprietors to each exploitation (5,501,000 proprietors and 3,096,000 exploitations) is explained, presumably, by the numerous cases of joint proprietorship: husband and wife, parents and children, etc.

233 TRANSHUMANCE has long played a prominent part in the
221 pastoral life of the Carpathians, for agriculturally the region is marginal and it is not very unusual for the maize crop, which covers an astonishingly large proportion of the arable land, to fail to mature. Before the late war the flocks of the eastern Carpathians used to winter in the plains of Moldavia, Bessarabia, the Dobrogea and south Russia, more rarely in Transylvania. During the nineteenth century, however, many Roumanian shepherds stayed in the plain and formed the nuclei of small permanent Roumanian colonies outside the boundaries of Transylvania.

423 DURING the last few centuries there have been considerable
311 changes in schemes of land holding. In the late eighteenth century the scattered possessions of the landlord class were consolidated into Latifundia. In the first half of the nineteenth century arable farming was extended into the Danubian plain and on the rich lands between Siret and Prut—in areas, that is to say, which had not been previously cultivated. This development progressed with the rise of an export trade in cereals to feed the industrial populations of the west. It is interesting to note that much of this newly-developed territory in Wallachia was organised on the system of métayage, the new colonists from the hills becoming tenants on a produce-sharing basis.

IN CONNECTION with this development, many of the Roumanian transhumant herdsmen gave up their pastoral life and settled as agriculturists or went into commerce. After 1918 the large estates were broken up and plots of land were given to the peasantry. This was the occasion for the return to Transylvania of some of the former emigrants who had gone to Wallachia and Moldavia, but naturally many features of the old life have disappeared, e.g. the July fairs that were formerly held high up in the mountains and did much to preserve the cultural heritage of the pastoral people.

[221] BUT, if large-scale seasonal migrations over long distances have declined, the short distance movements still play a vital part in the rural economy of the eastern Carpathians and fortunately have not as yet been divested of all their old-time ritual.

313 church, fencing, roofing, flooring, is of timber, and also many of his household utensils: water-buckets, jugs, spoons, etc.

IT IS very unfortunate that the most lucrative type of timber should be the most inaccessible. Timber from the great stands of pine has to take the slow and tortuous route down the rivers in rafts (see Plates VII and VIII) to the Danube and Black Sea. Afforestation has not reached a high stage of development as yet. The trees are propagated by naturally-sown seeds, and there are very few nurseries. Where the clearings are made, the stumps are left in the ground to add to the difficulties of the hay harvester.

221 WE MAY sum up the tale of Roumania's agricultural assets by saying that she is well endowed by nature as regards soils and climatic conditions for the wide-spread production of grain, fruit and vegetables; that natural pasture, whether upland or lowland, is seasonal and insufficient for a satisfactory development of cattle raising, though much may be done by an intensified cultivation of fodder crops. The increased provision of communal grazing for the peasants has been a useful step. Conditions are better for sheep, which are more adaptable than cattle and are better able to stand the rigours of the hard winter. Transhumance is everywhere practised with these animals: those of the great plains moving from the Danube lowlands in the spring to the hill pastures in the summer. Local transhumance of cattle, sheep and pigs from villages of the upland valleys to the high dairies is the rule.

LAND TENURE.

241 123 AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS, past and present, and the marketing of the products of land-utilisation are so closely bound up with conditions of land tenure that it is relevant to include here a short summary of those conditions.

IN THE PERIOD immediately preceding the outbreak of the Great War, 50 per cent of the land of Old Roumania was in large holdings (over 250 acres), and in the Bucovina, where the Roumanian peasants' holdings were pitiably small, 60 per cent. About 40 per cent of the holdings were of less than twenty-five acres. In Old Roumania and Transylvania the average was only eight acres per family, in the grain lands of Bessarabia eleven, but in the Bucovina uplands

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423 only three and a half. But 50 per cent of the registered large holdings were farmed in small parcels by peasants who paid rent largely in kind or in services to absentee landlords or large tenant holders, mainly Jews, to whom the land had been farmed out. Such an arrangement often meant a considerable return to the landowner or direct farmer at the
243 expense of the peasant labourer. On the large holdings wheat was the main crop, only about 14 per cent of the maize in Old Roumania being grown on large holdings. There are a number of reasons for this. First, more capital is required for the cultivation of wheat; wheat seed grain costs ten times as much as maize for an equal area; then, in the higher lands, where the smaller holdings are to be found, the heavier rainfall and shorter growing period is more conducive to maize cultivation than to that of wheat. Again, the traditional staple food of the peasant is the easily prepared "mamaliga" or maize pudding, and the difficulty of persuading a peasant people to change their habits of life is well known, also the heavy animal fodder provided by maize is an important consideration for the peasant. And lastly, where the maintenance of life is dependent on an adequate winter store, the peasant is more concerned with securing that tangible store than with providing a cash crop with which to acquire luxuries. The large farmer, on the other hand, was mainly concerned in producing a surplus crop of wheat for export.

423 BETWEEN 1916 and 1926 a great redistribution of land in the interest of the peasants took place both in Old Roumania and in the newly-acquired territories. Such a redistribution in a land with important ethnical minorities has naturally given rise to much discontent among the dispossessed landlords and as naturally forms the basis of much political discussion and unrest and endless propaganda by all parties. But we are only concerned here with the economic results of the redistribution.

423 IT MUST be recognised that the change from large- to small-
241 scale farming, however advantageous to the peasant against whom the scales had always been weighted in the past, means a change in the character of the land cultivation, and though farming methods even on the large farms cannot be said to have been very enlightened, a certain amount of

423 241 capital expenditure on the provision of machinery, artificial manures and so forth had been possible, and labour was cheap and available when required. With the small holding, these advantages can be acquired only by means of a highly-organised co-operative system and a controlled credit organisation, and there is no doubt that there has been a set-back in productiveness of large sections of the land. The large holders have been greatly handicapped in the exploitation of their land, moreover, first by government restrictions in the matter of wheat export, and second, by the great slump in wheat prices, probably also by inclement weather conditions. As a result there has been a drop of over 12 per cent in 1933 in the acreage under wheat and a corresponding rise in that under maize and barley.

241 312 To GET the best out of Roumanian agricultural land, improved communications is one of the first essentials, for the removal of surplus crops, for the supply of artificial manures, particularly nitrates, and for the spread of agricultural education. The Roumanian peasant is backward in farming methods and requires help, both educational and financial, in such matters as seed selection and manuring. He uses too light a plough to get the best results from the soil and for the conservation of moisture in the soil. A system of irrigation would be of immense benefit not only in the plains but also in the valleys of the uplands. Of course, lacking the great reservoirs of water in snowfield and glacier and lake with which Switzerland and Austria are endowed, the perennial irrigation which is common in those lands cannot be so easily obtained, though much more utilisation might be made of the streams if the peasantry were more enlightened in their use. Large-scale irrigation works would necessitate the construction of reservoirs in the major river valleys to store the surplus rains of spring and early summer and the snow melt. Control of the streams is a very urgent matter, for the amount of damage they cause, in the sudden floods to which they are liable, to roads, bridges and to arable land is enormous. One of the great difficulties that the engineers have to deal with, and this may also be an important consideration in reservoir construction, is the friability of the rock material in most of the foot-hill country of the Carpathians. (This was illustrated very forcibly in a journey by car from Vatra Dornei through the Campulung district.)

342 absence of small fields, although a vegetable garden is a
563 normal feature. Most of them are grouped together in a small colony on a piece of steeply-sloping ground near the western end of the village that could not be used for agricultural purposes, thus emphasising the fact that they constitute an exotic element living on the outskirts of the community (see Plate XII and Fig. 11).

311 THERE is no emigration from Corbu, but the tendency is to extend cultivation by forest-cutting. A good deal of land in the Bistricioara valley is still available.

II. FARMING ACTIVITIES

THE LAND AND INHERITANCE.

428 FARMING in Corbu is carried on essentially for subsistence
241 rather than for profit. Large-scale cultivation with its attendant economies would in any case be difficult in such an environment, but it is rendered impossible by a land tenure system, intimately bound up with laws of inheritance, which permits the subdivision of land from generation to generation. On the death of the father the widow receives a quarter of the estate, the remainder being divided equally amongst all the children. Alternatively, the latter take over their portion on marriage, but the result in each case is the same—the peasant holdings not only decrease in size but portions of the same holding may be widely separated. For it does not even follow that all the land surrounding a farmstead necessarily belongs to the family residing there. It did, of course, when the holding was first formed, but marriage has in most cases added complications. A portion of the holding, for example, may belong to a married daughter living elsewhere in the village and her husband will then come periodically to cultivate it as part of his estate. Much time is wasted in this way, so wherever possible an interchange of plots is arranged, especially where the parties to the marriage belong to different villages.

423 IN a register covering about 207 hectares of privately owned land there were 133 parcels registered, sometimes more than one in the name of a particular person. Of the 133, 56 were less than one hectare each, but at least 8 of these parcels were accessories to other holdings and those owners

423 dealt with a considerably larger area. Forty-six holdings were between one and two, 18 between two and three, 8 between three and four, 3 between four and five, and 2 larger (8.8 and 19.5) hectares in extent. These holdings do not necessarily represent the whole of the land owned by a peasant.

LAND UTILISATION.

311 BROADLY SPEAKING, the land within the commune may be divided into three categories: the alluvium of the Bistricioara valley and the lower portions of its tributary valleys which is devoted to arable farming; the deforested lower slopes of the valley sides, together with the broad upper portions of some of the tributary valleys and odd patches of level ground here and there which are reserved for hay; and the rest, which is forest with the exception of the small high-altitude clearings that provide summer pasturage for the transhumant flocks and herds.

311 ABOUT 58 per cent of the land belongs to the state, 37 per
423 cent to the commune, and the rest, comprising about 400 hectares, is owned by the peasants. These 400 hectares represent the arable land of the commune, whilst the state lands are entirely forest. The commune lands include a certain amount of forest, together with the hay meadows and summer pastures. The law tries to make peasants plant trees to replace those that they cut down.

CROPS.

241 IN the arable area the outstanding crop is maize, from which
[262] "mamaliga," the staple food of the peasants, is made. It is sown at the beginning of May, two hillings, separated by an interval of three or four weeks, are made during June, and the crop is harvested between September 25th and October 10th. Potatoes, hemp, flax, lucerne (of which three cuttings are usually made), a little rye, sunflowers and vegetables are grown, mostly in very small patches, giving the impression of garden, rather than field, cultivation. Occasionally a small orchard adds further variety to the general pattern.

246 THE HAY CROP is of vital importance, as in all mountain communities of this kind throughout Europe. It is harvested

FARMING AROUND CURTEA DE ARGEŞ

Amy R. Burgess

133 In the region of Curtea de Argeş the river flows in a valley of varying width, floored with fine sandy alluvium and bounded by somewhat rounded hills. Some traces of river terraces are discernible.

The land of this region can be divided into four categories: (*a*) arable, (*b*) hay meadows, (*c*) forest, (*d*) high mountain pasture. The arable land is principally on the first terrace, but stretches both down the slope to the valley bottom and up the slope to the second terrace. The hay meadows are above the arable land, spreading upwards towards the [137] forest. The forests comprise 75 per cent of the total area, and consist mainly of timber trees, such as beech and pine, together with a considerable number of walnut trees. The high pastures are above the forest belt and may be as much as fifty kilometres away from the village centre of the commune to which they belong.

● 423 The arable land is owned by the peasants, holdings ranging from less than one hectare to fifty hectares, the majority being from two to five hectares. The smallness of the holding [428] is due partly to the laws of inheritance, by which the land is divided between the children on the death of the owner, and partly to the fact that the district is so hilly that only small areas are available for cultivation.

241 476 The hay meadows belong to the commune and are both worked and used collectively by the peasants, all necessary organization being in the hands of the mayor and committee.

471 [313] The forests are largely state-owned, although some portions belong to the commune, in which case the peasants are allowed to cut for their own personal use (house-building, implements, etc.), but not for profit.

[233] The high pastures belong to the commune; the peasants pay a small fee to the commune for their use (20 lei per head per season for sheep, rather more for cattle).

132 An important climatic feature affecting agriculture is the shortness of the summer, late spring and early autumn frosts

the use of machinery are carried on at the school. Advisers are sent out to the farms, and seeds and plants, as well as artificial manure, are supplied to the peasants at a very low cost. Machinery is also loaned out cheaply. The average peasant, however, is very conservative, and progress is slow.

SOME DETAILS OF TWO FARMS: AUGUST 1936

FARM A

SIZE: one half-hectare approximately. This farm is situated approximately two miles north of Curtea de Argeş.

THE HOLDING consists of a narrow rectangular strip, bounded on one of its long sides by a rough lane and on its short side by the main road. The ground is fairly level and sufficiently above the river to be well drained. (See Plan A for utilization of land and arrangement of buildings.)

Animals

2 milking cows, 2 calves (at farm), but no oxen (this was unusual).
10 sheep, away on high pastures.
3 pigs, at farm.
10 geese, 6 ducks, 50 hens.

FARM B

SIZE: Five hectares approximately. This farm is situated at Corbeni, several kilometres north of Curtea de Argeş, at a point where the river valley widens out and the river braids. The farm is situated on the second terrace. The plot is rectangular, with its narrow side bordered by the road and its long side running parallel to the river, thus giving a well-drained but flat holding. The son of the owner holds a diploma for agriculture and the farm shows every evidence of prosperity. See PLAN B for utilization of land and arrangement of buildings.

SMALL PEASANT HOLDING

(Farm A)

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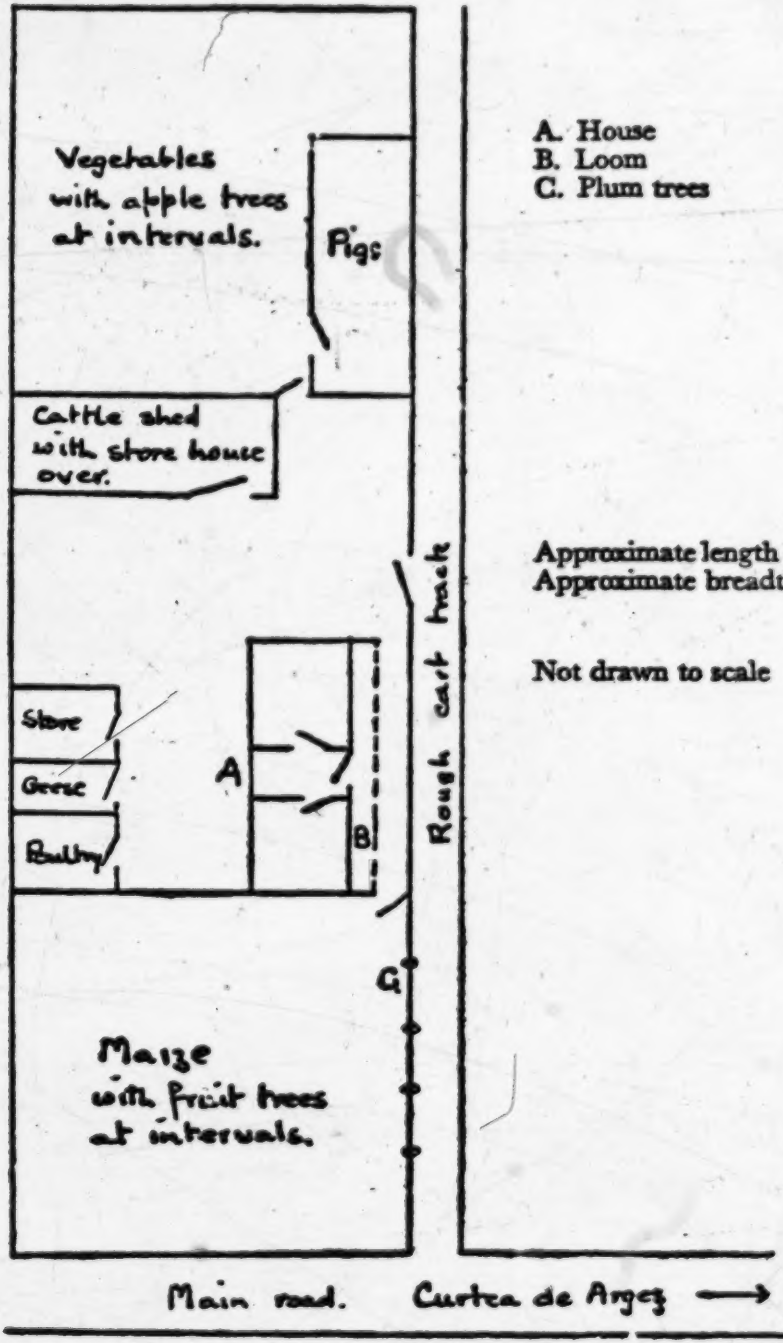
423



A. House
B. Loom
C. Plum trees

Approximate length 250 m.
Approximate breadth 20m.

Not drawn to scale

Drawn by A. R. Burgess

[Page 44]

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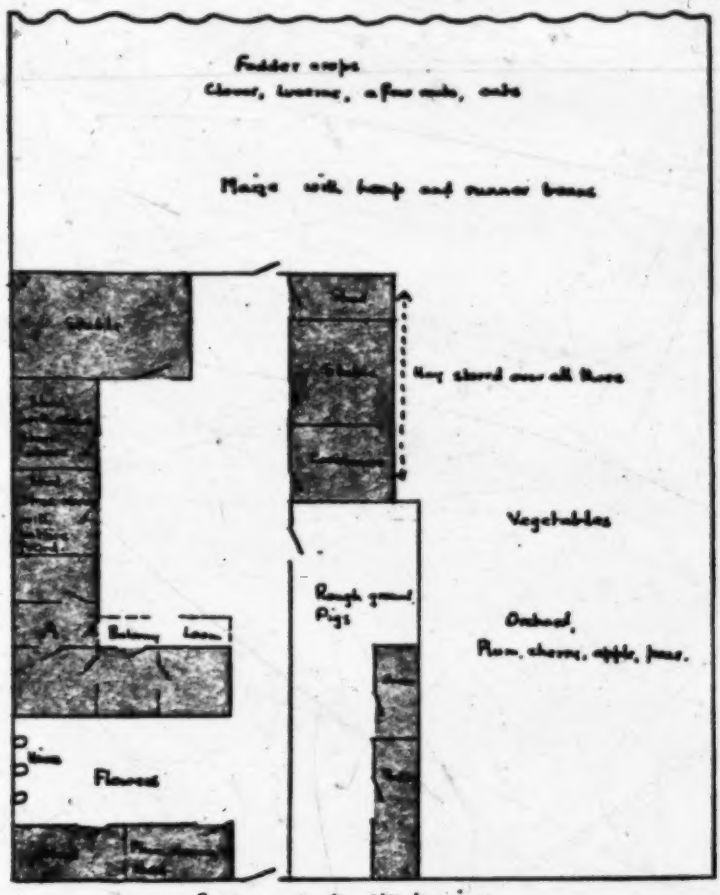
423

PLAN OF LARGE HOLDING

(Farm B)

Approximately 5 hectares
Not drawn to scale.



Drawn by A. R. Burgess

still abroad, was summarily dismissed. Peasant risings, a movement for autonomy in Transylvania, and general instability led to the nomination of General Averescu to office, owing to the reputation he enjoyed of being a strong man, having taken an active part in suppressing the peasant rising of 1907.

General Averescu's government passed the enactment dealing with the distribution of land to the peasants, while his Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Take Jonescu, laid the foundation of the Little Entente by concluding alliances with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. General Averescu attempted to open pourparlers with Russia, so as to prepare the recognition of Rumania's right to Bessarabia, and there was a fair chance of his succeeding, but he was baulked of his aim, for the King vetoed his plan.

To M. Titulescu was assigned the task of reorganizing the country's finances. This was deemed to be an intrusion into the special domain of the Bratianus[1] and so by provoking their hostility, brought about Averescu's downfall. M. Take Jonescu was his successor, but he was able to maintain himself in office only for a month. A government constituted by the Bratianu party followed in January, 1922, and remained in power until March, 1926. Owing to the disunion among the Opposition groups the Bratianu party was allowed to carry into effect its nefarious project of securing complete control of the economic resources of Rumania. The whole legislation passed during its tenure of office was of a purely economic character, and under the pretext of consolidating the finances of the country they merely consolidated their own financial dominance.

Popular dissatisfaction was steadily growing in the meanwhile, as instead of relieving the money stringency, the economic policy of the government did nothing but intensify the evil from which the country was suffering. On the other hand the Opposition was closing its ranks and organizing mass demonstrations throughout the country. A monster meeting of peasants was held at Alba-Julia in May, 1925, followed up by vigorous onslaughts against the government. The latter, unable to obtain a foreign loan which would have enabled it to stabilize the currency and relieve

[1] [The Liberal Party, headed by John Bratianu.—Ed.]

563 Tyrol, or the Ukrainians in Poland, for they at least possess a large number of schools and churches, mainly in communes [658] in which they form the majority of the population. At a time when the Rumanian government has been obliged for reasons of economy to close down several hundreds of schools and colleges, it would not be fair to impugn it for a shortage •[423] of Magyar schools in Transylvania. The burning grievance, of course, remains the agrarian reform, not only because it has dispossessed Hungarian and German owners, but also because the depreciation of the Rumanian currency has practically nullified the paltry compensation they were accorded. Furthermore, religious establishments possessed extensive domains which likewise were expropriated and [659] have thereby lost most of their revenues which formerly were employed in the upkeep of churches, educational missions, and benevolent societies. This naturally constitutes a source of bitter recriminations, for both Hungarians and Germans are inclined to ascribe the treatment meted out to their religious establishments as dictated by the desire of the Rumanians to discourage their cultural activities, and to hinder the normal development of their nationality by depriving it of pecuniary resources. It is a great pity that so far no law has been framed to define the status of minorities in Rumania though this has been persistently promised them. Such an enactment would formulate once and for all the respective privileges and duties of both parties, and there would be no further grounds for recrimination except in the case of a patent violation of its clauses. The National Peasant party had prepared such a scheme which, if enacted, would have gone a long way to settle this vexed question; unfortunately after its abandonment of power it has apparently been forgotten.

With the advent of the Iorga-Argentoianu government the laudable initiative of creating a sub-secretariat for minorities was taken, to which post, M. Brandsch, a member of the German minority was appointed. He seems to have carried out his duty very conscientiously, as he has repeatedly been attacked by the ultra-nationalist press of Bucarest for his disregard of the superior interest of the Rumanian cause, and for overduly favouring the minorities. There seems to

665 Rumania. The paper concluded by an exhortation addressed
571 to Bessarabians to evict Inculeţ from the political arena of Bessarabia where he had operated as though this region had been an African colony, and the appeal concluded with the hortatory incitation "Eject this putrefaction from Bessarabia."

661 In spite of the severe financial crisis which afflicted this
563 region, the fiscal agents of the government insisted on collecting taxes even when in years of drought the peasantry
661 was destitute and utterly unable to pay. The methods employed were so barbarous that they provoked several interpellations in the Rumanian Chamber. During its sitting of Dec. 10th, 1926, M. V. Madgearu denounced the abusive and inquisitorial methods by which Bessarabian tax-payers had been sold up and his arraignment was confirmed by similar indictments formulated by a member of the (then) government majority.

423 In October, 1930, a revolt broke out in southern Bess-
563 arabia. The peasants of the village of Baimaklia, near the town of Kagui, revolted and burned down the residence of a
661 big landowner because certain grazing lands were given to him by the State instead of being distributed among the peasants. That similar abuses are current may be inferred from an article in the "Aurora" of June 3rd, 1926, which is headed "The pauperization and humiliation of the Bessarabians," and in which it is related how certain State lands were put up for sale at Balţi, and though the peasantry of six adjoining villages had combined and offered 400,000 lei more than three big landowners, the lands were allocated to the latter, obviously through favouritism. That State functionaries often act with an arbitrariness and brutality
563 inconceivable in a civilized State may be illustrated by
661 the Soroca affair, which is of quite recent occurrence. In January, 1932, six Jewish youths, inhabitants of Soroca, on the Dniester, after coming to terms with the frontier-guards as to the amount of the bribe they would have to pay to be allowed to escape into Russia, and after they had paid 40,000 lei, were ambuscaded and shot down. In order to instil terror into the local population, their bodies were hurled pell-mell on a sledge which was driven by a soldier

AGRICULTURE

As a result of the legislative measures enacted in 1917 and 1921 Rumania, which was a country of vast latifundia, was transformed into one of smallholdings. Fear, rather than generosity or a desire to promote the country's welfare, prompted the initiation of these enactments. The Russian example which was nigh would have proved contagious had a policy of repression been adopted similar to that of 1907, when over 11,000 Rumanian peasants were ruthlessly massacred in their vain attempt to secure more humane treatment at the hands of their landlords. The landed classes had therefore to yield much in order to retain at least a little. Besides, the initiative had already been taken by Bessarabia, prior to her final declaration of union with Rumania in 1918, of enacting the expropriation of the large estates, and Rumania was confronted with the dilemma of following suit or of seeing Bessarabia demand the annulment of the act of union just passed, for it was impossible for the latter to rescind this measure.

That no high motives were behind this policy of expropriation may be inferred from the perfunctory manner in which it was applied, and the absence of a rational plan for putting it into operation. In fact, one of the reasons for the sudden dismissal of the first Vaida-Voevod administration in 1920 was apprehension lest Mihalache, the then Minister of Agriculture, would have seen to the thorough and rational execution of the expropriation decrees. It could have been easily foreseen that the peasantry, who until then had been in a state akin to serfdom, were destitute and had not the capital wherewith to exploit the lands that were being allotted them. It was the imperative duty of the State to find the means necessary to endow the peasantry with the indispensable agricultural equipment for the cultivation of their lands. The Governments presided over by the Bratianus, however, were busy reserving the exploitation of the natural resources of the country for their partisans, and the peasants were left to fend for themselves as best they could. The Bratianus would suffer no harm from the fact that the State was

neglecting the peasants; on the contrary, they saw in them a numerous and profitable crowd of clients for the banks, the majority of which were under their control. The less pecuniary aid the peasant obtained from the State, the greater would be his need of the private bank or usurer. And so well did the latter entangle the peasants in their tentacles that within ten years of the enactment of the Land Distribuion Act the debts contracted by the peasants had surpassed the value of their lands. Thus the much-belauded agrarian revolution in Rumania was threatened with complete failure, and so another revolutionary measure had to be passed, the strangely-termed "law for the sanitation of agrarian debts," in order to save the peasantry from being dispossessed of their land.

The *Argus* of 13th February, 1932, published the following table which shows how the land was actually distributed:

Area of properties.	Total hectares.	Percentage of area.	Number of proprietors.	Percentage of total. Owners.	Average area of farm for each category.
Up to 5 hectares ...	6,280,993	43.60	3,731,403	84.20	1.94
5 to 10 hectares ...	2,919,863	20.20	435,715	11,30	6.70
10 to 50 hectares ...	2,392,689	16.60	148,860	3.90	16.07
50 to 250 hectares ...	1,505,257	10.40	18,122	0.50	83.06
Over 250 hectares ...	1,305,670	9.10	2,597	0.10	502.00
Total ...	14,404,462,	100.00	3,836,757	100.00	3.75

As one hectare sown to wheat yields approximately 1,200 kg. of wheat, and the average price of wheat during 1931 was about 2.25 lei, the revenue per hectare may be reckoned at about 2,700 lei. As the average holding of 84 per cent of the peasantry is about 2 hectares, the paper assumed that the revenue of each peasant household amounted approximately to some 5,400 lei, or about 160 gold francs. For the year 1931 the total revenue from agriculture was computed at 46,500 million lei, of which 21 milliards were derived from the cattle-rearing industry, 21 milliards from cereals, and 4½ milliards from other plants. Other crops were even less profitable; thus the average price of maize was 1.50 lei per kg. and the yield 1,500 kg. per hectare, so that the revenue per hectare amounted to 2,250 lei, and the figures for barley were respectively 2 lei, 1,400 kg., and 2,800 lei.

of at least 30 per cent in three years, which would represent an increment of 20,000 million lei to the national income, and the writer proceeded to show how erroneous it was to continue following a policy of encouraging industry, since the latter could never yield similar results in so short a time no matter what amount of capital was invested in it. He further enlarged on the necessity of creating a system of credit institutions which would offer loans to the peasantry, for the latter had been completely abandoned to themselves, and he stigmatized the attitude of the Government in this respect as "a policy of complete economic aberration."

There are many who attribute the decadence of agriculture in Rumania to the Agrarian Reform, but this is an altogether gratuitous conclusion, though in a particular sense their assertion is correct. One may, for instance, take it for granted that had the large landowners subsisted, owing to their political influence they would never have allowed the Bratianu Governments to institute such legislation as rendered the marketing of agricultural produce impossible on a remunerative basis. Indeed the cultivation of the soil had ceased to be a profitable one even as early as 1924, and large farmers employing paid labour could not make enough out of their produce to cover their outlay plus the normal rent of their farms. This was exposed at length in the *Argus* of July 29th, 1926, and the paper attributed to this cause the decrease in the area sown with wheat in Moldavia and Bessarabia, where the best corn lands in Rumania are to be found. One could further infer from the arguments invoked that it was only the smallholder who could persevere in such a disadvantageous occupation as agriculture, because he neither stinted his efforts nor valued at its true worth the amount of labour he expended on his own land, such being the traditional attitude of the peasant. M. Dobrogeanu-Gherea, in his informative book "Neoiobâgia," relates how the peasantry persisted in cultivating their land in the neighbourhood of Ploeşti after 1907, when owing to the development of the oil industry the price of land had increased to such an extent as to render agriculture an uneconomical occupation. Thus, while a pogon[1] of land was let at 50 lei,

[1] One pogon is equivalent to 5,012 sq. metres.

10: Logio S-4 (no date) 1932 ED1 Rumania ED1

the price of the quantity of maize grown on it would fetch only 40 lei; nevertheless the peasant owner persisted in cultivating his patch of land because he felt ashamed to allow it to lie fallow, having always been accustomed to cultivate it, and buy the maize he needed instead, for which, however, he would probably have to pay a somewhat higher price than the 40 lei at which he could have sold his own (p. 111). So that, far from exerting an adverse influence on production, the breaking up of the large estates has, on the contrary, proved to be the salvation of the industry, for were it not for the abnegation and attachment of the individual smallholder to his farm, agriculture would have been completely ruined by the policy imposed by the Bratianus. Indeed, one cannot but admire this profound devotion of the peasant to the land and his dogged persistence in carrying on, despite the odds which confronted him and the utter lack of encouragement he met with from the State. We may take it for granted that the small farm of five hectares was more productive than the large estates, even from official statistics. This peculiarity was commented on in the *Cuvantul* of July 23rd, 1927, which at the same time decried the maladministration of the then Finance Minister, M. Vintila Bratianu, and his threat to increase the land tax. That paper contested the official statement that the land tax in Rumania amounted to one gold franc per hectare, as this affirmation would cast a slur on the country. In fact it was estimated that in 1924 the export taxes on cereals had yielded the equivalent of a tax of 8 gold francs per hectare.

The determined perseverance of the peasantry could not undo the harm caused by the erroneous agrarian policy pursued, and the situation could not but grow worse with time.

So that when finally the National Peasant Party assumed power at the end of 1928, the situation had become so hopeless that the Rumanian Government even contemplated organizing a mass emigration to France and her colonies in order to relieve the strain. Early in 1929 the Press, commenting on this unexpected decision of the Government to encourage emigration, admitted that the cause of the disastrous condition agriculture had reached in Rumania could

241 be clearly traced to the carelessness with which the law of
● 423 land distribution had been drafted, and to the utter neglect
[51] to provide financial means for its rational application, as well
167 as to the export taxes on agricultural produce. The outcome was appalling, as may be judged from an article in the *Cuvantul* in which, after dilating on the causes that had brought about this disaster, it was asserted: "We are obliged to admit that the entire rural population had reached a state of pauperism at a time when we should reasonably have expected it to be thriving, since it had been endowed with lands. It seems a paradox, yet we have only wrecked the old system of production, founded on the unjust system of latifundia, in order to replace serfdom by pauperism. At the time of the large estates the rural worker had no need to emigrate; on the contrary, there was a shortage of labour, and foreign labourers had to be admitted from neighbouring countries. To-day, however, we are forced to direct the rural population abroad so as to save it from starvation; that is the situation we have reached ten years after the enactment of the expropriation laws. . . ." According to the *Adeverul* of March 29th, 1929, the Minister for Agriculture, speaking about the state of that industry, drew a very dark picture and lamented the wretched condition to which agricultural production had fallen. Rumanian agriculture, once the source of wealth and the economic basis of the State, was, he said, on the verge of ruin. The Minister not only condemned the culpable manner in which the land distribution law had been carried out, but also denounced the laxity and incapacity of the functionaries who had been appointed to show the peasants new methods of cultivation. According to him, the so-called model school farms were a positive disgrace. . . . Apparently matters have not improved since, for
241 as late as March, 1932, one could read in the *Ellenzek*, a
874 paper published in Hungarian at Cluj, that the Hungarian Cultural Association of Transylvania had decided to present a petition to the League of Nations to demand the creation of an agricultural school destined exclusively for sons of Rumanian citizens of Hungarian nationality. One ought not to feel surprise that the Hungarian minority, convinced of the glaring ineptitude of the Rumanian administration, had

AGRICULTURE

owing to the natural increase of her population, will in a couple of years have no more wheat available for export, and in ten or twelve years it will be the same with maize. It is imperative, therefore, for the Government to take without delay the steps necessary to increase the yield. This can only be done if the State will undertake to provide selected seed corn, to establish rural banks to enable the peasantry to obtain advances of funds at cheap rates in order to buy machinery and implements, and to create model farms in which more modern methods of cultivation might be demonstrated practically. If grain elevators were also constructed in important agricultural centres, and adequate storage accommodation made available, it would be easy to advance money to farmers on the security of the cereals they could store as a pledge. And if Rumania decided to return to methods of legality and offer safeguards to foreign capital there would be no difficulty whatever in obtaining all the capital she requires for financing such operations, as they would then prove perfectly sound. It is this utter lack of capital which has handicapped the development of agriculture since the war, for the smallholder had to pay usurious rates of interest (40 to 60 per cent being current), while prior to the war large owners could obtain advances from the banks on very reasonable terms. It would be altogether unjustifiable, therefore, to assert, as some people allege, that the breaking up of the large estates had led to the decline of agriculture. On the contrary, it is this measure which has permitted agriculture to survive, for owing to the systematic diversion of capital from agriculture to industry, the owners of the large estates would have found themselves in a worse fix than the smallholders if they had continued to exist and therefore required advances for the maintenance of their estates, as was formerly their wont. Without liquid assets they would have found themselves utterly unable to carry on the cultivation of those large estates, while the smallholder, by dint of hard work and privation, has managed to keep his patch of land under the plough. Some persons may retort that, if the breaking up of the large estates had proved to be a practical operation, the rural population would not have run into debt to the extent of

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241 some 80 milliard lei, and obliged the Government to pass the
● 423 law decreeing the conversion of agrarian debts, in order to
426 save the peasantry from the predicament of being dispossessed of their land by their creditors. The large owners, however, were in as bad a plight and perhaps worse off, for when the legislation concerning the cancellation of agrarian debts was under discussion in the Chamber, the director of the *Argus* suggested that Ministers and deputies should be excluded from being among the beneficiaries of the proposed law, so that they should not be accused later of having passed such a revolutionary measure mainly for self-interested motives. His suggestion was not supported, a fact which would tend to prove that large owners were perhaps more insistent on the adoption of this measure than smallholders, to many of whom it has proved highly prejudicial.

That the agrarian revolution did not solely profit the peasantry, and that others took advantage of it to appropriate lands to which they had no right, and that the latter were more insistent on the voting of the law for the conversion of agrarian debts, is an undisputed fact. This is proved also by an interview published by the *Adeverul* on September 9th, 1930, in which Prof. Iorga was reported to have said: "When the expropriation of the large estates was carried out many mistakes and injustices were committed. Real cultivators were not endowed with land in order that in their place land should be bestowed on various political partisans, electoral agents, and others who had nothing in common with the land or agriculture. Having thus secured the land, they set about to increase their holdings by buying up with borrowed money adjoining tracks, and started exploiting them on American methods. But their calculations were erroneous, because with us agriculture is not profitable except for the owner who himself cultivates his land. This category of landowners should not be assimilated with the peasantry, and the State should not assume charge of their debts." This wise recommendation, however, was not followed, and large owners were permitted to a certain extent to take advantage of the law of conversion of agrarian debts.

241 That it was absolutely indispensable to extend some help
426 to the peasantry no one will dispute, but this law of con-
453

12: Kormos S-4, 5 (no date) 1944
ED1 Rumania ED1

This state of affairs led to the great and bloody peasant revolt of 1907 which was ruthlessly crushed by the Bratianu government with the help of troops commanded by General Averescu. Yet, even after this the rulers of Rumania were unwilling to carry out reforms which were already overdue. Only in 1917, when the position on the Rumanian front seemed completely hopeless and when the Russian Revolution found more and more adherents among the peasant soldiers, did the government of King Ferdinand decide to carry out a thorough land reform. Although this was the most far-reaching of any measures ever carried out in Rumania, it bore all the marks of a step adopted unwillingly, under the pressure of external events. Although the Bratianu government, composed of many big landowners, consented to carry out the land reform, it was violently opposed by many of the government's supporters. The reforms, as finally applied in the early nineteen-twenties in both the Old Kingdom and in the New Territories, differed considerably from the original plans of 1917. They did, however, bring about important changes. Whereas before the Great War half of all the arable land belonged to a few *boiars*, by 1930 about nine-tenths belonged to small holders and only one-tenth to big landowners.

In Bessarabia many of the big estates remained untouched; land was given to reliable farmers, Germans and Rumanian colonists, but not to the landless who needed it most. In Transylvania the land reform was used to strengthen the Rumanian as against the Magyar elements of the population. But many of the holdings remained too small to

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12: Kormos S-4, 5 (no date) 1944
ED1 Rumania ED1

provide their holders with a fair income, and a considerable part of the rural population remained landless. Worst of all, those peasants who did obtain land were given neither implements nor sufficient financial help which could have enabled them to make a decent living. Neither of the measures which are essential to the success of peasant proprietorship —State aid in money, machinery and technical advice; or the creation of large-scale co-operative societies and banks—were carried out. Undoubtedly the extension of the franchise in 1923 to all men of 21 and the land reforms greatly strengthened the position of the peasantry in the State. But, actually, it was widespread discontent with the working of the agrarian reform that stimulated the organization of the National Peasant Party.

CROPS. The great devastation of Rumania during the First World War and the effects of the land reform resulted in a great reduction of the country's agricultural production during the immediate post-war period.[1] Whereas the Old Kingdom alone in 1913 had grown 2,200,000 tons of wheat, of which 1,150,000 tons were exported, and over 3,100,000 tons of maize, of which 1,000,000 tons were exported, the production figures for Greater Rumania in 1921 were for wheat 2,140,000 tons, and for maize 2,810,000 tons. This great decrease is all the more striking in view of the fact that the amount of arable

[1] In Transylvania and the neighbouring territories, taken from Hungary, some of the great *latifundias* had been well and scientifically worked with modern agricultural machinery. There were some conscientious landowners among the Magyar nobility as well as absentee landlords who neglected their peasantry.

A. PRE-WAR CONDITIONS

1. General

241 Agriculture occupies about 80 per cent. of the population of Rumania and contributes the greater part of the national income but, owing to the importance of the country's mineral-oil [439] production, exports of agricultural products accounted for rather less than half of total exports by value, in the immediate pre-war years.

Total agricultural production, even if there were no exports, would fall seriously short of the real food needs of the country. The poorest are actually [146] underfed, while the majority of the remainder subsist on a diet which, though adequate in quantity, is seriously deficient in quality and nutritional elements.

In her farming Rumania suffers from two inter-related difficulties: rural over-population and low [161] food output per acre. There are 16 agricultural workers per 100 acres of farm land, compared with 6 in Denmark and 3 in Britain. Another aspect of this is the extremely small size of most of the farms—75 per cent. of them are less than 5 hectares (12 acres) in extent. Because there is not enough land to go round, most farming families have to eke out a living on holdings which under any system of general farming would be too small to provide an adequate income.

The position would be less serious if a high per-acre food output were achieved. But in fact the Rumanian output per acre is barely one-quarter of that obtained in countries like Belgium and the Netherlands. Rumania pivots her farming on wheat and maize production but, owing to the extensive methods practised, the few livestock kept, and other reasons, per acre yields are among the lowest in Europe.

It is the over-population and land shortage which are largely responsible for agriculture remaining so backward. Having insufficient land the peasant does not produce much for sale, and so cannot afford to purchase fertilisers, good quality seed or better implements. Nor can he spare many acres for fodder crops, since the bulk of his land is needed to grow the food his family eats. And as he cannot buy fodder, he cannot keep many animals. Thus, while there is some scope for agricultural improvements which would ameliorate the peasants' lot, the pre-requisite of farming progress is to find alternative occupations for the surplus population.

•423 The system of land tenure is peasant proprietorship. This was attained under the Land Reform 471 carried through after the first World War. The effect of this was to divide up and transfer to peasant ownership a large area of land formerly worked in big estates. This revolution in land tenure provided a solution for a long-standing social problem, but its effects on production were unfavourable. The large estates had been run by trained managers, with relatively advanced methods and equipment. Their transfer to ill-equipped, backward and uneducated peasants was followed, for a time at least, by a decline in yields, and consequently in total production and exports.

241 Little progress was made in the period between the two wars in remedying the disadvantages of uneconomic farm sizes, and in raising the low standards of farming. For lack of education the

241 the peasants and the reduced 1942 sowings both of grain and of sugar-beet indicated continued 656 dissatisfaction. Finally, by the spring of 1943 a 435 wider ratio was reached, agricultural prices being four times as high as in 1939 and wholesale prices in general three and a half times as high. Nevertheless, this very considerable measure of inflation [458] has shaken public confidence in the value of money so that peasants increasingly resort to barter transactions.

[655] In the hope of obtaining better control over grain supplies the Government in the autumn of 1941 nationalised the grain trade, later they relaxed this to the extent of leaving the export business to a few selected firms and the internal collection to the Army and to the National Institute of Co-operation. This body handled the pre-war grain marketing scheme, and their [563] activities—because of the expulsion of Jews from wholesale and retail trade—have recently developed rapidly in the supply of seeds to peasants (80,000 tons of seed distributed in 1942) as well as consumers' goods to peasants and townspeople. But it still proved difficult to extract enough food from the peasants to feed the towns. For the 1943 harvest detailed regulations were made concerning the quantities the peasant might keep for seed, for his family and for his animals, and threshing operations were subjected to inspection. Yet these rules could not in practice be administered.

423 It is now generally agreed in Rumania that the 471 smallness of the holdings has been a principal obstacle to effective organisation of agriculture in war-time, and that a change to larger units of production is needed. Any approach to collectivisation on the Soviet model, however, would be regarded as contradictory to the land reform policy and a threat to the Rumanian State. The official policy, though it has not yet taken its final form, is to maintain private property but to proceed no further with expropriation and division of large estates, and to maintain existing medium holdings by prohibiting their sub-division for inheritance or other reasons. Schemes for the consolidation of strips are also contemplated for a more opportune moment. Further, in order to 474 increase production and to improve the peasants' methods and standards of life, communal farming associations, known as *obști*, are to be formed. In these associations farming equipment is to be pooled so that the small-holder would have the same resources as the large farmer. Each *obște* is to embrace a village and perform all the functions of a co-operative, including joint purchase and sale, use of breeding animals, processing of crops, etc. Villages which are prepared to form themselves into *obști* and to undertake to work the land according to State directions, are promised tractors, seed and breeding stock without payment. In this way it is hoped that some of the advantages of collectivisation may be achieved while retaining those of individual ownership. But, unless accompanied by far-reaching industrial development, the plan can but aggravate rural unemployment. It is not known how this innovation has been received by the peasants. It was reported in April 1943 that 270 of these communal associations had been formed—an insignificant number—and it is believed that the Government is allocating to them some of the tractors imported from Germany in the war years.*

241 The success of the *obști* plan, and indeed of any plan for up-grading Rumanian agriculture, depends

* In June, 1943, a temporary ban was placed on the formation of any new *obști*, because there was insufficient agricultural machinery to supply to them.

137 Banat and in west Transylvania; and of these 15 per cent. are not easily accessible and are unremunerative to exploit on account of heavy capital expenditure necessary to build suitable roads and railways. The forests of the plains were of minor importance, especially since they consisted almost entirely of young trees yielding firewood only.

Beech was the principal forest tree, except in the plains, where it gave way to various species of oak. The eastern Carpathians constituted the only predominantly coniferous regions.

● [423] The following table shows how the forests were owned and managed; column 1 shows the area in million Hectares, column 2 the equivalent in square miles:—

	I	II	% of Total
State owned	1.9	7.3	30
Owned by communes, churches, etc.	2.0	7.7	30
Owned by companies and private persons.. ..	2.5	9.6	40

About 70 per cent. of the forests were treated as "high forests" (i.e., allowed to grow naturally) and the remainder were under varying forms of "coppice management" (i.e., allowed to grow from roots after cutting, thus producing small timber).

2. Annual Increment and Domestic Consumption

313 439 Chiefly as a result of Rumania's Agrarian Reform policy in 1924 and 1925 of clear-cutting huge forest areas to provide peasants with additional agricultural land, very large volumes of timber became available for the export market, with the result that a wrong impression was created abroad that Rumania was a country with a large export surplus of timber.

313 Present fellings are not known, but a considerable shortage of forest workers and draught animals, coupled with poor transport conditions generally, are making it impossible to fell and to distribute sufficient timber to meet all home demands. These have been considerably increased by the need for timber for military purposes both in the country and at the front, and for reconstruction work in the war-damaged areas of Bessarabia, Bucovina and Transnistria. The result is a heavy and at times serious shortage of supplies.

[439] Exports, which had already fallen to about 562,000 cubic metres in 1940, further declined after the loss of Transylvania and were only some 210,000 cubic metres in 1941, but of these about 180,000 cubic metres were old accumulated stocks of sawn goods which were sold to Germany and the U.S.S.R. at the beginning of that year. No information has yet been received concerning 1942 exports, but the increasing difficulties of production make it unlikely that these were of any importance, and probably did not exceed 50,000 cubic metres.

[656] The forests are now placed under Government control and many decrees have been published regulating and defining the quantities and dimensions of trees that may be felled. Maximum prices have been fixed for all classes of timber, and a strict rationing of firewood introduced, whilst in 1942 an export embargo was placed on several categories of timber, principally soft woods.

After the cession of Northern Transylvania, German forestry experts visited the country to advise on proper forestry methods, and although there is no real evidence of what was decided, there are indications that the country is now more forestry-minded, and that more regard is being paid to reafforestation and other necessary work. These are, however, long-term policies and can have very little immediate effect or improvement on the country's present difficult situation.

TABLES

1. Details of Cut and Ownership, 1930

[423]

Timber	*State*	*Communes*	*Private*	*Total*
	(*in '000 solid cubic metres*)			
Conifers ..	570	2,450	2,850	5,870
Beech ..	1,080	300	480	1,860
Oak, etc. ..	350	390	520	1,260
Firewood ..	2,820	2,130	6,930	11,880
Total ..	4,820	5,270	10,780	20,870

2. Distribution of Timber Industry, 1938

	Units	*Personnel*
Total timber industry ..	713	43,326
of which :		
Sawmills	478	37,693
Distribution of total timber industry by administrative regions :—		
Olt	18	1,756
Bucegi	159	7,177
Marea	3	38
Dunarea de Jos ..	29	932
Nistru	3	109
Prut	67	6,222
Suceava	110	6,555
Mureş	155	9,196
Someş	83	7,163
Timiş	86	4,178

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advertise to the Rumanian masses, most of whom had never heard his name. On March 8, therefore, Groza was told to ask Stalin for northern Transylvania, and by return telegram he received it as a "present." The Nazis had not yet been expelled from Budapest, so there was nobody there for Moscow to take into account. The Western Allies were not consulted. As a matter of fact, they had no objection to the return of at least most of Transylvania to Rumania, but would have preferred that it be done after study as to whether or not there should be frontier rectifications in favor of Hungarian ethnic groups; and they certainly would have considered it more suitable that the transfer be made after agreement among the Allies rather than unilaterally by one of them.

The steps by which the Communist-dominated Rumanian Government became an absolute Communist dictatorship need not be detailed here.[3] In the beginning there certainly were some non-Communist elements which favored a clean sweep of the old order even though the representatives of the new order were Communists and protégés of the hated Russians. Seizure of the large properties still left in Rumania after the land reforms following the First World War was popular in principle. Rumanian régimes of the inter-war period had not been noted for efficiency or probity, and the Communists hastened to identify all Rumanian statesmen who held democratic beliefs and had a Western orientation with the "old gang" of profiteers and politicians who had mocked the Constitution in the dissolute days of King Carol and had ended by taking Rumania into the war as the ally of the Nazis. The fact that Maniu, the country's leading statesman, was famous for his incorruptibility and stubborn devotion to the Constitution did not deter Communist propaganda from picturing him also as a corrupt relic of the old dictatorial order. The Socialists were, of course, completely outbid by Communist promises of pie in the sky.

But although these tactics had some success at first the only one of them that was based on anything substantial, the gift of land to

[3] For a fuller outline of the postwar evolution in Rumania as well as other parts of Eastern Europe, and of relevant negotiations (if they can be called that) between the Soviets and the Western Powers, see Campbell, *op. cit.*, also volumes for 1947–48 and 1948–49 in the same series by the same author, and the volume for 1949 by Richard P. Stebbins.

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the peasants, was a boomerang. The land reforms of 1919–21 had distributed about 14 million acres among about 1,400,000 peasants. The new Communist expropriations distributed an additional 2,750,000 acres among about 1,100,000 peasants. It has been calculated that as a result more than half of the land holdings in Rumania consisted of less than seven and a half acres per family. Most farms of this size were insufficient to support independent farmers. Now this may have been as the Communists planned, for it enabled them to point out the advantages of collectivization to peasants who lacked even the minimum of tools and draft animals to cultivate their small private holdings. But when they did so they lost the popularity they had gained, both with peasants who worked ancestral lands and with those who had just shared in the expropriated estates.

The Communists thus felt it necessary to make their political position more secure, in particular to head off their natural rivals in the countryside, the formidable National Peasant Party headed by Maniu. In December 1945 a correspondent of the London *Times* had written critically of Maniu's "rigidity" and unwillingness to accept a modern "radical policy," and had blamed his "unbending attitude" for the "inevitable" political crisis. Less than a year later (October 18, 1946) the same or another correspondent of the *Times* reported from Bucharest that Maniu was "more popular than ever in his long career." The dispatch continued: "His past mistakes and weaknesses are forgotten. He stands now not for any program or ideology but for the idea of national independence. He is the symbol of the Rumanian nation."

As the Rumanian nation was to be destroyed, Maniu had to be destroyed.

This was the period for dealing with peasant rivals to the Communists in all the agrarian satellite states. In Bulgaria, the leader of the Peasant Party, Petkov, was arrested in June 1947 and hanged in September. In Poland, the leader of the Peasant Party, Mikolajczyk, was harried from the political scene and in October 1947 was forced to flee to London. In Hungary, the Soviets had made the mistake of permitting free elections and had lost them to Nagy's Smallholders Party; but they had stipulated that regardless of the